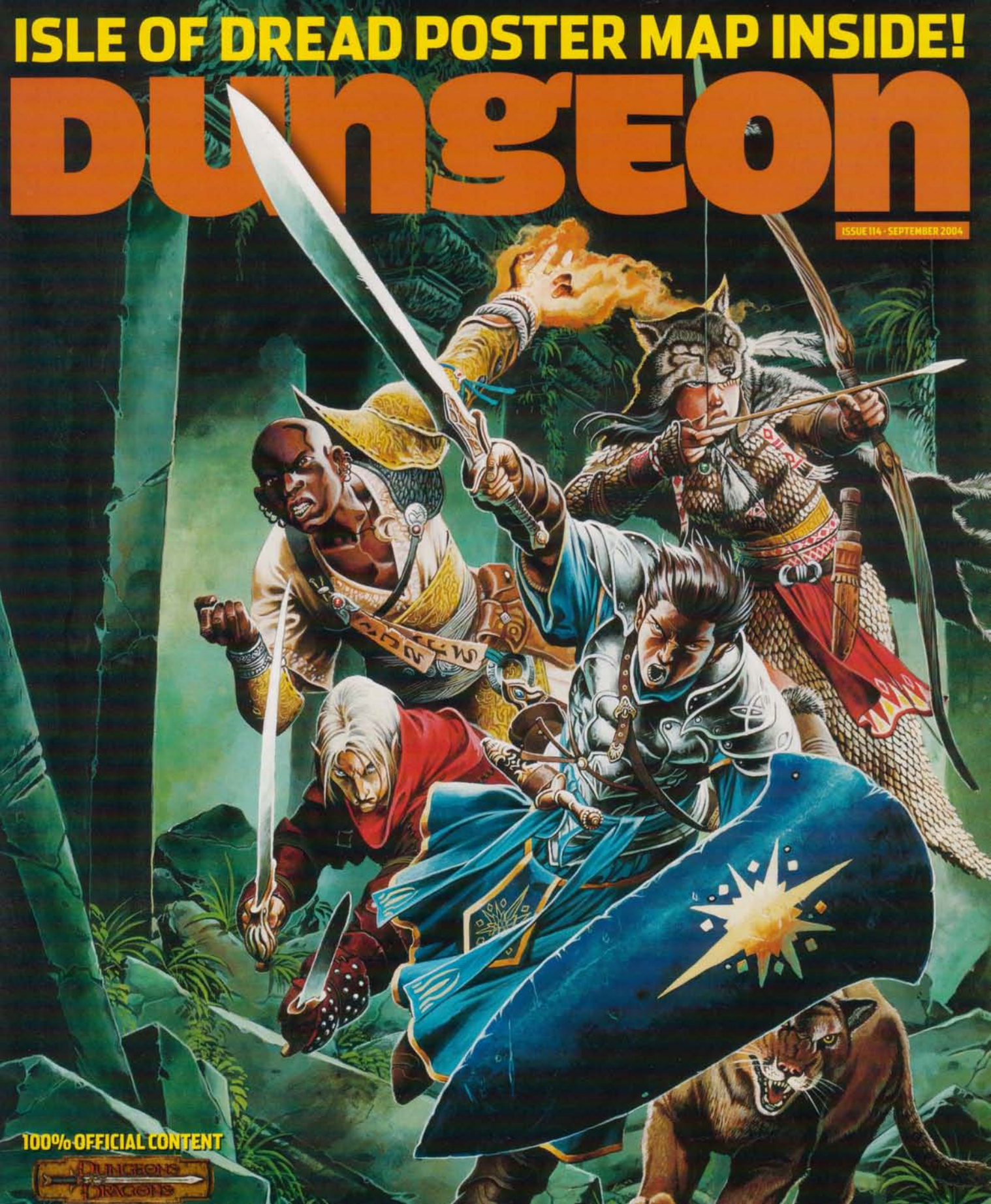
ISLE OF DREAD POSTER MAP INSIDE!

DUNGEON

ISSUE 114 · SEPTEMBER 2004



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"Look at these poisonous color-maps where flesh trees grow from human sacrifice. Listen to these snickering, half-heard words of tenderness and doom from lips spotted with decay." — William S. Burroughs
Ah Pook is Here

BACKDROP

40 EXPLORING THE ISLE OF DREAD
Gary Holian
Detailed encounter charts, a poster map, adventure hooks, and places of mystery complete this overview of a dinosaur-ridden jungle island that has spelled doom for thousands of D&D players. Suitable for any campaign.

ADVENTURES

18 MAD GOD'S KEY
Jason Bulmahn
A hunt for a missing key leads the heroes from the streets of the city of Greyhawk to the Tomb of Blood Ever-flowing in the treacherous Cairn Hills. A LIVING GREYHAWK-compatible adventure for 1st-level characters.

50 TORRENTS OF DREAD
Greg A. Vaughan
A supernaturally powerful storm, mudslides, and agitated dinosaurs are the least of the worries in the tropical village of Mora. The village's spiritual leader, the Zombie Master, has gone missing, and now undead rise from sodden graves and the village matriarch lies dead, murdered by her own son. What dire menace awaits in the flooded catacombs below? Find out in this adventure for 6th-level characters, set on the infamous Isle of Dread.

70 THIRTEEN CAGES
Chris Thomasson
At last! The heroes finally track down the insidious Cagewrights for a final showdown in their lair deep beneath the volcano of Cauldron. But who secretly leads the Thirteen, and what will his final message mean for the PCs? A Shackled City Adventure Path scenario for 16th-level characters.

ON THE COVER

Wayne Reynolds paints an explosive cover to announce a new era for *Dungeon* magazine.

CARTOONS

39 The Portent
92 Mt. Zogon
104 Downer

COLUMNS

6 Editorial
8 Prison Mail
94 Dungeoncraft
106 Wil Save

CAMPAIGN WORKBOOK

98 The Dungeon
100 The Journey
102 Critical Threat

RPGA NETWORK

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Take advantage of the RPGA'S Player Rewards program by scoring points with the adventures from this issue of *Dungeon*! Each adventure is worth 2 D&D Player Rewards points, and remains active until 10/30/04.

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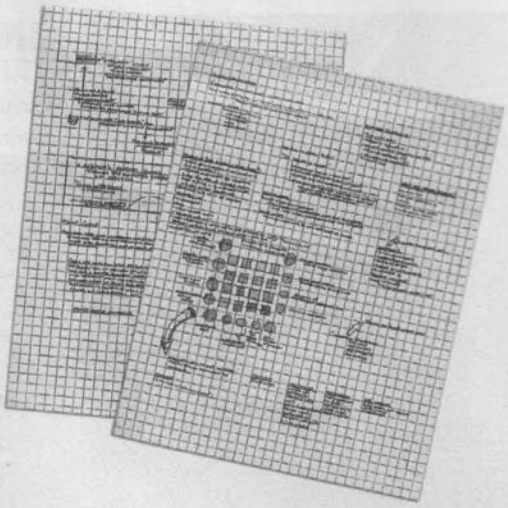
Thirteen Cages (114TC1DN)



BUILDING A BETTER DUNGEON

The past few years have seen a lot of changes for *DUNGEON*. We moved from Wizards of the Coast to our new home with Paizo Publishing, jumbled up the staff a time or two, and introduced a number of new features designed to appeal to a wide audience of roleplaying enthusiasts. At every turn, we looked to our mailboxes, email accounts, and Internet message boards to see what the audience thought about where the magazine was headed.

The issue you hold in your hands is the result of more than two years of careful listening to our audience. We've heard what you've been telling us about what you'd like to see in *DUNGEON*, and we've done everything we can to make a new magazine based on your feedback. The new *DUNGEON* has a lot in common with its predecessors, but we're essentially embarking on a new enterprise that begins with this very issue.

With #114, *DUNGEON* becomes the definitive official monthly resource for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Dungeon Masters. In order to best achieve this goal, we've decided to focus exclusively on the D&D game. You fantasy lovers will find plenty to drool over, as our coverage of D&D increases to every corner of every page. Those of you with more varied tastes will, I trust, discover that the new *DUNGEON* will be every bit as eclectic and interesting as the old.

What's New?

Talk about a "new" magazine is only so much bluster without a bunch of new regular features, and we've assembled a few we think you'll really like. They include:

Dungeoncraft: Monte Cook's popular DM advice column makes the transition from our sister magazine, *DRAGON*, and we couldn't be happier to have it. Not only is Monte the author of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, but he's also one of the best DMs I've ever known. When he gives advice, he really knows what he's talking about. Even the most experienced among us can learn from a really good fellow DM, and Monte is certainly that and a whole lot more.

The Campaign Workbook: The back of the magazine is home to the Campaign

Workbook, a collection of short articles and play aids aimed at helping you manage your campaign. Each two-page article focuses on key D&D concepts useful to all DMs: the Cast to appear next month, the Dungeon, and the Journey. Whether your PCs are hanging out in the city, delving the depths of Maure Castle, or traveling in between, the Campaign Workbook's got you covered.

Dungeon Lairs: Occasionally, we'll spice up the Campaign Workbook with an all-new lair, complete with a half-page map and some descriptive text. Sometimes, the players just want to abandon your carefully laid plans to go monster hunting, so you'd best be prepared with the tools to teach them a lesson or two.

Critical Threats: Each issue will feature an NPC designed with a specific campaign role involved. This issue's Threat, the assassin Lassiviren, is an excellent tool to bring unruly characters into line, but not all Critical Threats will be enemies.

Product Spotlight: We don't want to hammer you over the head with commercial messages, but Wizards of the Coast produces products that can help your campaign on a monthly basis, and we plan to tell you about the best of them. *DRAGON* will cover books aimed at PCs in more depth than we could hope to, but starting next issue, we'll get you the latest on cool new products directly from the Dungeon Masters involved in putting them together.

Wil Save: Take a second to flip to the back of the magazine for a look at our newest column, from none other than Wil Wheaton, star of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Stand by Me*. A lot has changed since Wil played Ensign Wesley Crusher, but one important fact has remained the same—Wil is very much one of us. I hope you'll enjoy his insightful observations about the gaming life as much as we do. We grabbed the column in this issue off his website, and had to invite him to join the ranks of our regular contributors.

Old Favorites

Of course, *DUNGEON* is nothing without adventures. Adventures have always been the main focus of this magazine, and the new era won't change that a bit. Every month, the new *DUNGEON* features three complete DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventures, each geared toward a specific range of character levels and player experience. With a low-level adventure in every issue, *DUNGEON* becomes an excellent tool to bring new DMs into the hobby, and to guide them toward the true Dungeon Mastery.

Low (1st–5th level): Low-level adventures emphasize teamwork and exploration of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS core rules. Designed with an eye toward new and even first-time players, these easy-to-run adventures illustrate important game rules (flanking, terrain challenges, etc.) in play. Low-level adventures might introduce game elements such as new feats or monsters, but the focus will be firmly on using the rules the players already own.

Medium (6th–12th level): Geared toward experienced players but with enough explanation to accommodate new players, mid-level adventures introduce slightly more challenging game elements such as powerful outsiders, complex rules (underwater or aerial combat), and difficult-to-adjudicate spells. New game elements might include prestige classes, potential cohorts, and new monsters.

High (13th-level or higher): Challenging, high-impact adventures for experienced players and Dungeon Masters. High-level adventures might involve trips to other planes or battles against extremely powerful foes (demon lords, elder dragons, and the like), and are open-ended enough to account for the versatility of high-level player characters. These adventures let players revel in their characters' fun abilities, enjoying the rewards of their PC's experience.

We'll also regularly feature Backdrops, fully detailed plug-and-play adventure settings that can be added effortlessly to any D&D campaign. This issue's "Exploring the Isle of Dread" is an excellent example, with plenty more to follow. If we think we can get away with it and the timing is right, we'll even include a poster map of the location that you can hang on your wall or spread out on your gaming table. Backdrops will include cities, taverns, temples, demiplanes, and perhaps even whole nations. Of all the changes in store, this one excites me the most. I hope you like it, too.

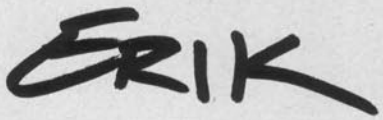
What's Around the Corner

A lot of the planning that's gone into the new *DUNGEON* won't begin to appear for several issues. We've got a lot of milestones in store, including exciting adventures from Wolfgang Baur, Keith Baker, Christopher Perkins, and more. Issues #117, 118, 119, and 120 will contain a massive four-part map of the WORLD OF GREYHAWK, the "world" of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS and the background for many of our adventures. The preliminary sketches for this project have been absolutely marvelous, and we'll continue to update you on progress as we inch toward publication.

This issue was supposed to contain the second-to-last Shackled City Adventure Path, but the finale (by Chris Perkins) came in so long we had to cut it into two. Think of it as a bonus Shackled City adventure, an unexpected gift from us to you that will appear in the next two issues.

The Adventure Path has been a staggering success, and we appreciate all of your positive comments on it. We're deep in the planning stages for the *next* Adventure Path, which is sure to pack a tremendous punch. Send us letters to let us know what you'd like to see.

We designed the new *DUNGEON* with you, our faithful readers, in mind. Wizards of the Coast may own *DUNGEON*, but it belongs to all of us. Take part in crafting the future of your magazine by sending suggestions and comments via email to dungeon@paizo.com



Erik Mona
erik.mona@paizo.com

Tell us what you think of this issue. Write to: Prison Mail, Paizo Publishing, 3245 146th Place SE, Suite 110, Bellevue, WA 98007 or send an email to dungeon@paizo.com.

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Dungeon #111

Our June issue featured a sneak peek of the Lord of Blades, a prominent villain of EBERRON, the latest D&D campaign setting. Other features included "The Strike on the Rabid Dawn," Frank Brunner's assault against the base of devil-worshiping pirates; "Lords of Oblivion," the seventh installment of *DUNGEON's* popular Shackled City Adventure Path storyline; a *Star Wars* RPG article about the *Droids* cartoon series; and 17 new DARK SUN monsters from David Noonan. Back issues are still available at www.paizo.com.

A little over a month ago, Paizo Publishing Vice President Keith Strohm posted an "open letter" to various Internet message boards and to our own website. Keith's letter summarized some of the details in this month's editorial, and was the first sign that "things were changing" encountered by many of our readers. Understandably, it generated a lot of mail, some of which we've reproduced below.

We'll Miss Poly, Too

I wanted to drop a line and let you know that I won't be extending my subscription to *DUNGEON* after hearing about the upcoming editorial changes, and, specifically, the removal of *POLYHEDRON* and all non-D&D content. This was the main reason I purchased *DUNGEON* at my local game store and subsequently purchased a subscription to *DUNGEON* for the first time. There aren't many outlets, if any, for the *Star Wars* RPG, *d20 MODERN*, and other d20 news, and *POLYHEDRON* was the only magazine out there producing content for these systems. The Mini-Games, I believe, were the best feature of the old *DUNGEON/POLYHEDRON*.

I realize that the editorial decision was made because too many readers did not like the non-D&D-adventure content. I wanted you to know that there's at least one reader whose reasons for subscribing were the opposite.

Mike Grasso
Via Email

The Writing on the Wall

Well, crud. I know I should have written this earlier, and I knew from the handwriting on the wall that it was probably coming, but I'm still disappointed. As one of the (apparent) minority of folks who looked forward every few months to a new d20 Mini-Game, *d20 MODERN* content, or even *Star Wars* content that I could steal for my game, I'm really saddened by the open letter announcement.

I will very much miss *POLYHEDRON*. I know many others will not—but really the reason I decided to "jump back into" *DUNGEON* after so long was because of the new *POLYHEDRON* content.

I won't be giving up on my subscription to *DUNGEON*, though. It looks like everything that I have been reading *DRAGON* for is being moved into the new *DUNGEON* format. *DRAGON*, on the other hand, sounds like it may lose a lot of its utility for me. My D&D campaign doesn't need a lot of "player cookies" at this point (you know, new spells, new races, new classes, prestige classes, new feats, etc.). We don't play the D&D MINIATURES game, and I don't have time to play around with computer games.

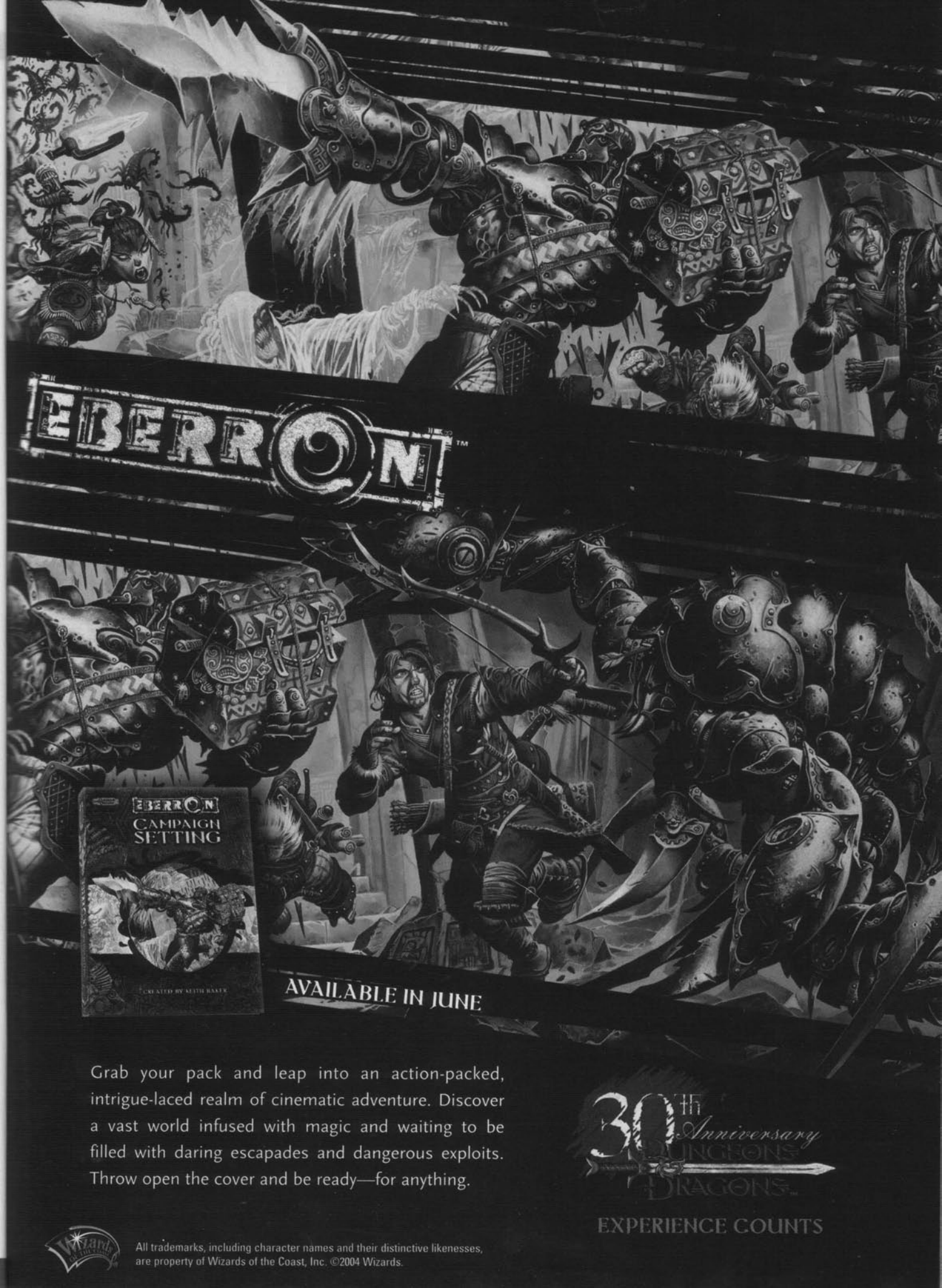
Good luck with these changes—I hope things work out well for both magazines.

Jeremy Morris
Columbus, Ohio

Glad to Have You Back!

About two years ago I sent a scathing letter regarding my subscription—specifically the combination of *DUNGEON* and *POLYHEDRON*. Simply put, I didn't appreciate paying almost double to have *POLYHEDRON* attached to my *DUNGEON*. Although some things were interesting, I never had subscribed to *POLYHEDRON* and did not want it, and surely did not want to pay extra for it to be included.

I told you I would not renew my subscription. Until today, my last issue was going to be #113. Until today. After reading Keith's open letter, I renewed my subscription for three years. Thank you again for listening to your core (majority) subscribers. I first bought issue #9 in the store, subscribed starting with issue #14, and spent some real effort and cash getting the #1–6 back issues (#7 was the



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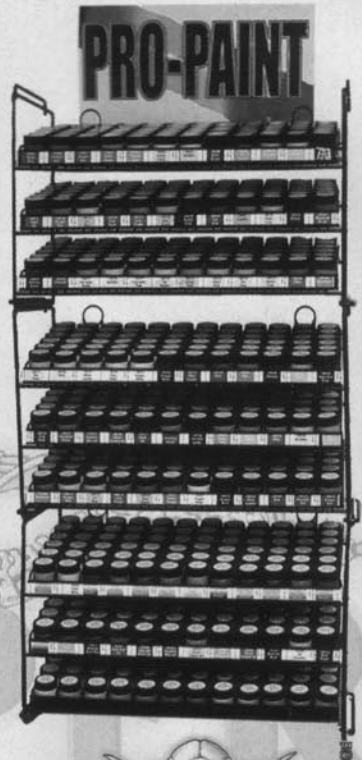

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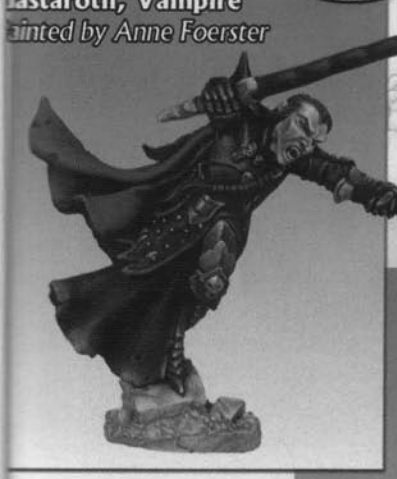

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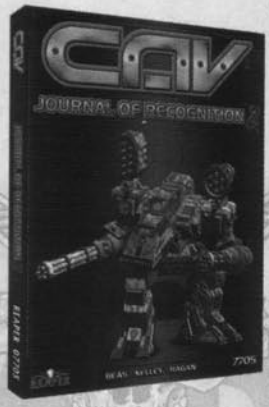

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Carry Oomis
The Netherlands

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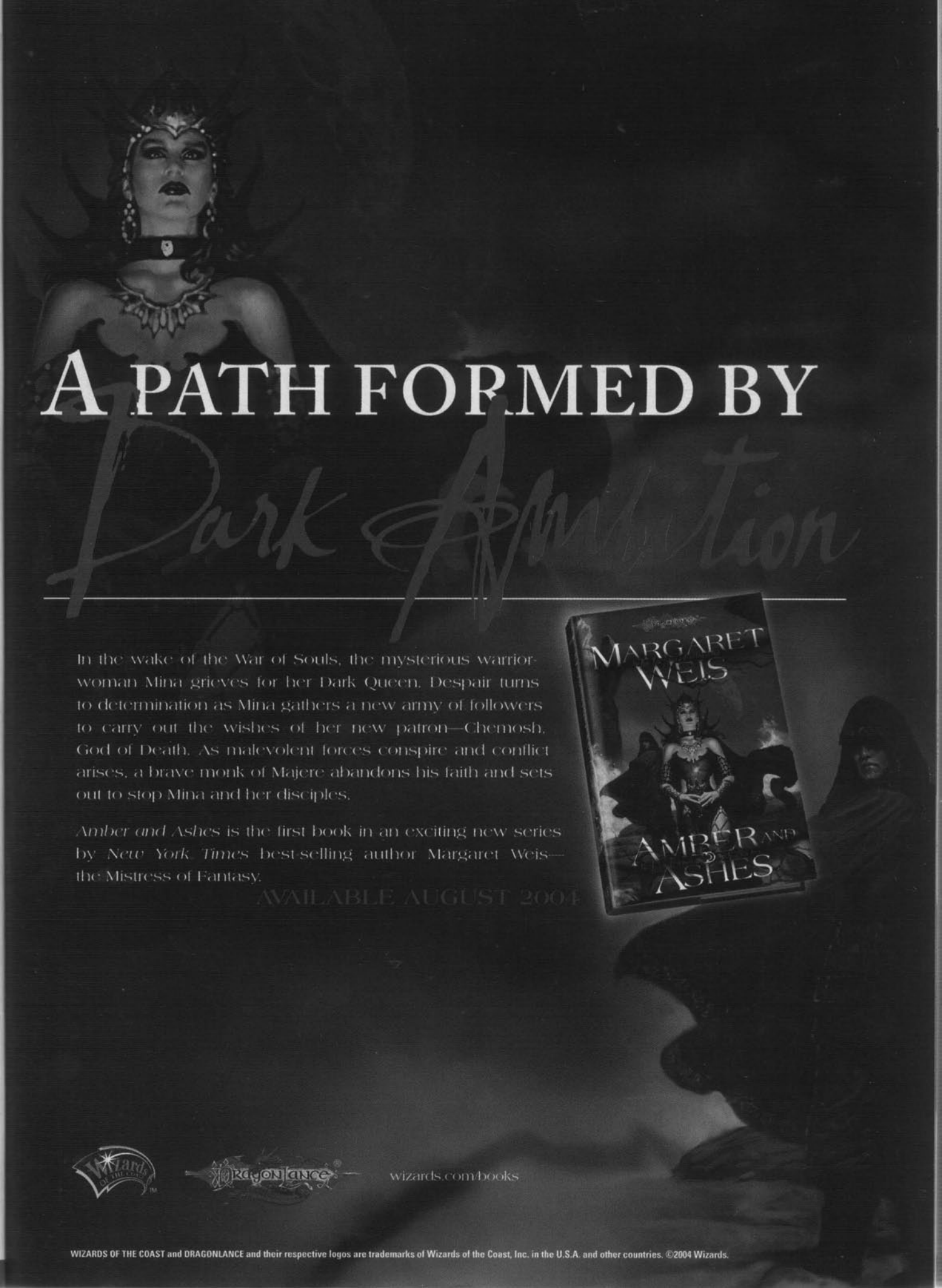
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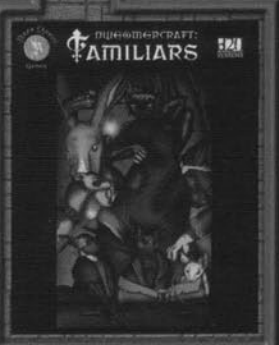

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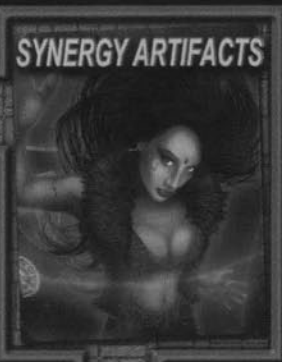

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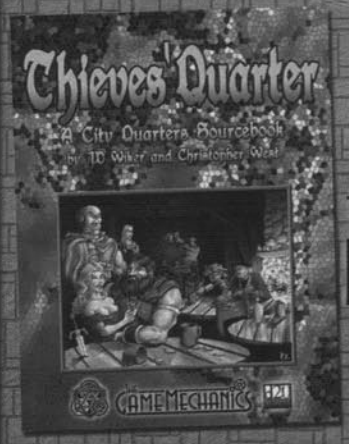

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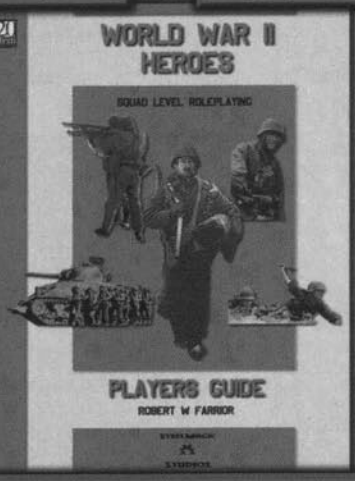

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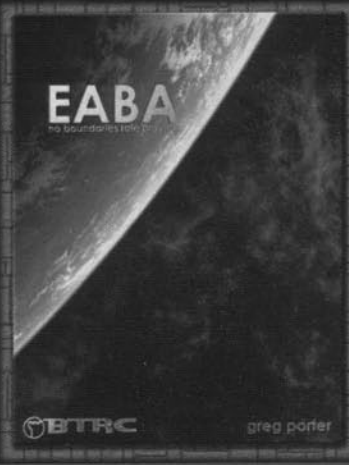

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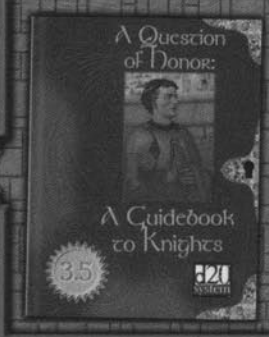

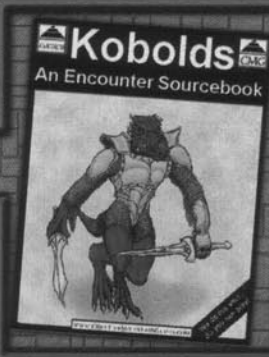

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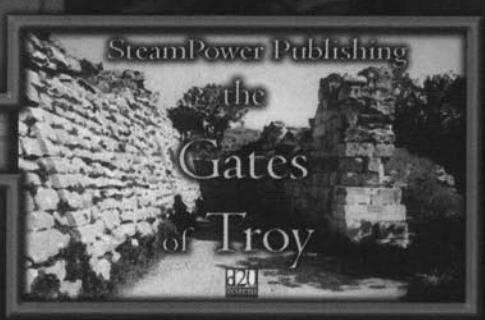

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Mad God's Key

By Jason Bulmahn
Illustration by
Chris Stevens & Ben Huen of UDON
Cartography by Robert Lazzaretti

Any Setting • Low-level (1–5) • Urban & Dungeon Crawl

In a city of thieves, every honest door bears a sturdy lock. But what if a single key opened them all?

"Mad God's Key" is a D&D adventure appropriate for four 1st-level characters. The DM can modify this adventure for higher-level characters by adjusting the encounters as described in the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar. Although it can be easily used in any campaign, this scenario was specially designed to serve as an introduction to LIVING GREYHAWK, the largest "organized play" DUNGEONS & DRAGONS campaign in the world. Additional rules for playing "Mad God's Key" as an official LIVING GREYHAWK event are included at the end of this adventure. The action begins in the city

of Greyhawk, a notorious haven of cutthroats, adventurers, and thieves. If this adventure is used in an ongoing campaign, any major river port city can act as a suitable replacement for Greyhawk.

Preparation

Dungeon Masters who plan to use this adventure as an introduction to the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign should be familiar with the guidelines presented on page 39. These guides can help you create LIVING GREYHAWK characters as well as track their adventures. In addition, the RPGA website (www.rpga.com) has a number of valuable tools you can use to learn more about the ongoing campaign. To play this adventure as a sanctioned campaign event, simply order it using the RPGA system and download the Adventure Record (AR) that each player receives at the end as a record of participation. The AR also tracks the hero's gold and experience earned. The code used for ordering this adventure is MDGKY1LG.

Adventure Background

Theldrat Meldorp was an ordinary locksmith until very recently. Two months ago, while going through some of this father's old things, he found a plain wooden box containing a simple copper key. Thinking little of it, Theldrat began going about the house he had inherited from his father to see if the key fit any of the locks. It fit all of them. After a bit of further testing, Theldrat discovered that the key had the ability to open any lock within the city of Greyhawk. A little research on the unusual zig-zag symbol etched into the key revealed to Theldrat that the item once belonged to one of the city's most eccentric mayors, the archmage Zagig Yragerne. Zagig created the key to combat his tendency to lose them, reasoning that one key would be easier to keep track of than 30. After Zagig abandoned the city in favor of mad experiments in the dungeons of Castle Greyhawk 173 years ago, the key was lost and eventually found by Theldrat's father, who used it for many varied purposes but kept its existence secret.

After he discovered the key, Theldrat's business quickly increased. His ability to open any lock within the city quickly earned him a reputation as the best locksmith in town. His fame did not go unnoticed, however, and those with power and magic at their disposal quickly learned his secret. Chief amongst these was a cult dedicated to Vecna, the lich-god of secrets. The cult had long harbored designs upon an ancient tome held within the Great Library of Greyhawk, a tome with an unopenable locked clasp. The cultists have hatched a plan to steal Theldrat's key, which they hope can open the mysterious tome.

One month ago, the cult set their plan into motion, assaulting a young cleric of Boccob and robbing him of his vestments and holy symbol. Two weeks ago, the cultists began covertly infecting a small criminal gang called the Green Daggers with a horribly debilitating disease. As the symptoms of the disease manifested, the Green Daggers quickly became convinced they were suffering from a highly contagious malady. When the cultists of Vecna (disguised as clerics of Boccob) approached the criminals, the Green Daggers were quick to agree to do a favor for the clerics in return for a cure for the disease. The favor seemed simple enough; all they had to do was procure a simple key currently owned by a locksmith by the name of Theldrat.

The Green Daggers delegated the job to a ruthless brute named Irontusk. Only last night, Irontusk broke into Theldrat's business and made off with Zagig's wondrous key. As he fled the scene, he told a few of his street thug buddies that the business was fair game so long as they got there before the city watch noticed. As this theft was underway, a Vecna cultist stole into the Great Library of Greyhawk, still disguised as a cleric of Boccob, and absconded with the mysterious locked tome. The two missions complete, the cult then returned to its hideout in the Cairn Hills nearby to examine their prize.

Adventure Summary

The PCs become involved when they run across Theldrat's business being pillaged by a pair of street thugs. Shortly after the PCs deal with the thugs, Theldrat arrives at the destroyed shop and immediately begins a panicked search for the key. The adventurers quickly discover that the thugs know nothing about a key, and were in fact told to loot the place by someone named Irontusk. Theldrat does not want the city watch involved with the search for the key and pleads with the PCs to help him.

After pressuring the thugs, the heroes quickly learn that the half-orc can be found in Barge End, a crowded and treacherous shantytown sprawling on the riverbank just north of Greyhawk. However, just as they arrive, Irontusk is tipped off to the PCs' approach. The hulking brute makes a run for it across a number of gypsy river barges in an exciting chase scene. After catching him, the heroes learn that he sold the key to a gang of criminals thick with some wasting illness.

Armed with the information from Irontusk, the PCs then break into the Green Dagger Gang's base of operations. After braving a number of simple traps and various guards, the heroes do battle with the diseased thieves. From them, they learn of the mysterious cleric of Boccob who offered healing in exchange for the key. None of the gang have yet recovered despite drinking the entire cure.

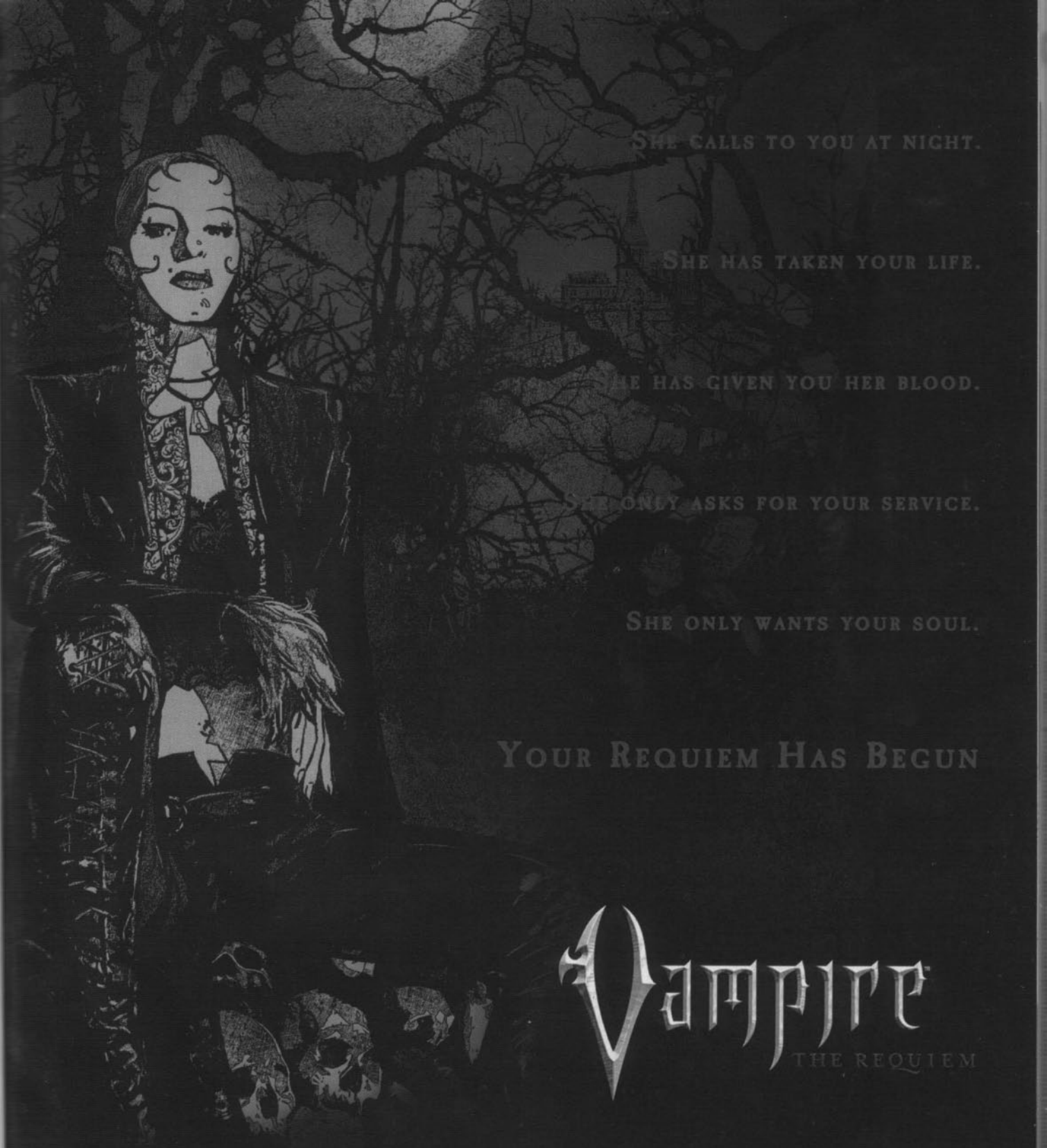
The heroes later hear of the brash theft at the Greyhawk Library by a cleric of Boccob. Both leads send them to the temple of Boccob for answers. Although getting an audience with the senior members of the clergy proves difficult, the PCs do manage to speak with the same acolyte who was robbed almost a month ago and left near naked in an alleyway. His assailants left only one thing behind, a strange stone pendant depicting a fist squeezing out a large teardrop. With a bit of research, the heroes learn that the pendant comes from the Cairn Hills north of the city. This particular pendant's unique design can come from only one place, the Tomb of Blood Everflowing, an ancient abandoned sepulcher deep within the Cairn Hills.

When they reach the tomb, the heroes must make their way through a series of chambers leading ever deeper into the blood-stained halls, fight a number of guardians (living and not), and navigate through some dangerous traps. The characters eventually make their way to the heart of the shrine of Vecna to recover the key and missing tome, only to discover that the key has lost its powers and that the book leads to further questions and adventures.

Chapter One: Introductions

This adventure begins with the heroes in Greyhawk City. Their reasons for traveling there are incidental to the plot of this adventure; they could be seeking adventure, visiting a relative, or just exploring one of the largest cities in the known world. "Mad God's Key" occurs in the mid-spring, during the first peaks of the trade season. Merchants and other travelers occupy most of the rooms available throughout the city's many inns and taverns. The PCs can find a place stay at the Blue Dragon Inn (located across the street from where the first encounter of the adventure takes place).

As the adventure begins, find out from each player what their character is doing in the Blue Dragon Inn or the immediate surroundings. Not all the PCs need to know each other before the adventure begins, but they should all have their own reasons for being in this part of the city. Perhaps the Blue Dragon Inn is the only place they've been able to find with rooms, all other inns being taken by the flood of merchants in the city. Perhaps they're meeting someone at the inn, or maybe they're just passing by during an early morning walk.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The Looted Locksmith (EL 1)

Greyhawk city is a metropolis like no other. There is something here for every traveler, merchant, and hero alike. Adventure waits around every corner and danger lurks down every alley. Morning in the city of Greyhawk is much like all other times of the day—hectic. Today appears to be no exception. Although this part of the vast metropolis has not yet fully woken up, it appears that some of the lesser folk have. Across the street, a pair of filthy thugs has started to ransack a locksmith's shop.

Creatures: The thugs, Marek and Flegon, rummage through Theldrat's shop with confidence. They've been told by a half-orc associate named Irontusk not to expect trouble, and he was right. As the two thugs begin to loot the shop, other inn patrons take note of the event, shrug their shoulders, and go back to breakfast. Most of them are visitors to the city, and none have any interest in getting involved with criminals this early in the morning. Unless the PCs do something, the thugs continue looting until Theldrat arrives.

Marek and Flegon spend almost all their time on the street, and have the smell to prove it. Dressed in filthy rags, they carry crude daggers as weapons. If the PCs approach the pair, they immediately react by drawing their daggers and attacking, hoping to scare off the PCs with their bravado. They certainly aren't expecting to have to back up their bravery with action. Neither is particularly brave, and if reduced to fewer than 3 hit points they drop their weapons and surrender.

Marek and Flegon, Male Human War1: CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d8+4; hp 10; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+1/19–20, dagger) or +3 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will –1; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +5, Hide +3, Intimidate +3, Move Silently +3.

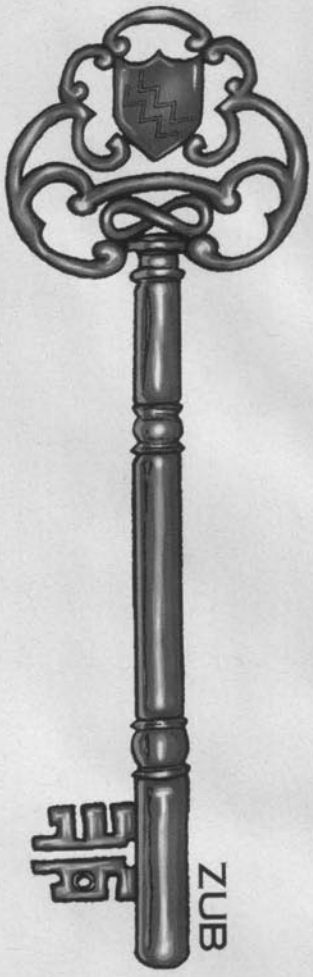
Feats: Dodge, Toughness.

Languages: Common.

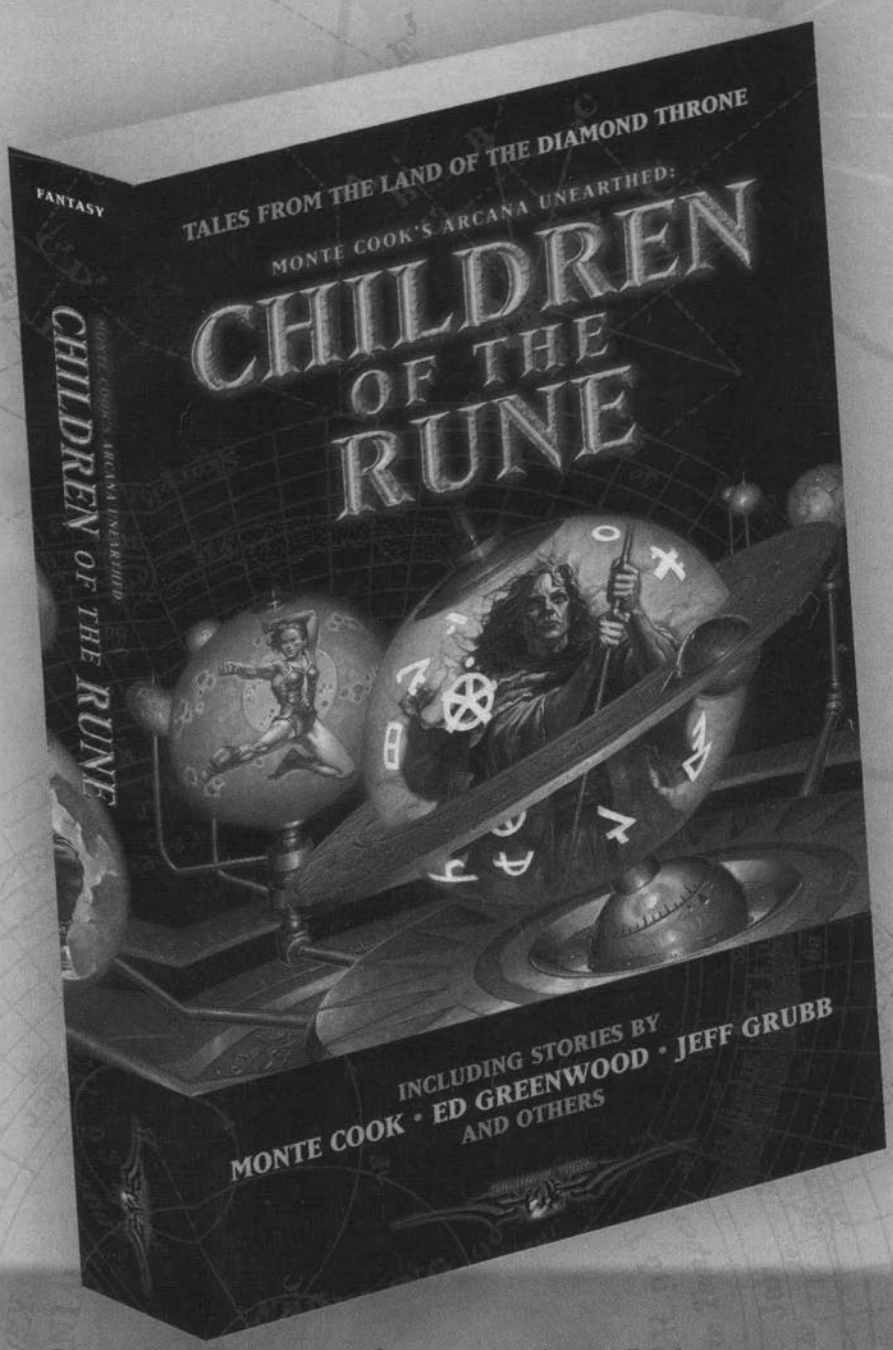
Possessions: 3 daggers, filthy rags, coin pouch containing 6 sp.

Development: As the combat comes to a close (or just before the thugs finish looting the shop if the PCs don't intervene), Theldrat Meldorp (male human Exp4, Craft [Locksmithing] +13, Open Lock +11) arrives to open his shop for the day. A portly, coppery-skinned man in his late forties, Theldrat is a worrier by nature with nervous habits (such as wringing his hat and curling his mustache). Seeing the establishment completely ransacked upsets Theldrat nearly to the point of hysterics. After he identifies himself to the heroes and asks them to contact the militia, Theldrat rummages through the ruins of his business, desperately looking for his key. When he realizes it's missing, he angrily turns to the burglars for answers. The thugs profess their ignorance to any key, mentioning that the shop's front door was hanging open when they arrived and the key must have been stolen earlier in the morning.

Finally, Theldrat turns to the PCs. If they helped defend his shop, he thanks them for their assistance. Even if they didn't help, he quickly sizes them up as adventuring types and then asks for a favor. He desperately wants his key back, but is hesitant to explain to the heroes what it actually does. He instead maintains that it is a valuable family heirloom that means a lot to him. If the PCs press the matter, Theldrat explains that the key was a gift from his father and is one of the few things he has to remember him by. All of this is true, so no Bluff skill checks are needed. Theldrat hopes the heroes help him out of their own good will, as he has little to offer them as reward for their aid. He describes the key as relatively plain, made of copper, and with a double zig-zag symbol at one end. Only if the PCs refuse to help him does Theldrat mention that the key is magical and vital to his business.



If the thugs survived a fight with the PCs and were allowed to surrender, they are only too happy to offer what information they can to stay in the PCs' good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graces. They reveal that they were told by a friend to rob the place of valuables after he was through with it. They admit that they last spoke to him at Barge End, a shantytown just north of the city. However, due to their own fear of Irontusk, they refuse to reveal his name without pressure (a successful DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidate check).

Soon after the PCs have interrogated the thugs, the city watch finally arrives. If the thugs live, they quickly take a report and cart them off to prison. If the PCs killed either of the thugs, the guards question them about the incident before determining their innocence and letting them go. The guards make a point of asking both the thugs and the PCs if any of them were near the Great Library of Greyhawk last night, for another robbery took place there only a few hours ago in the pre-dawn hours of the day. Neither of the thieves knows anything about the robbery (and neither should the PCs). Should the PCs question the city watch about the robbery, they are told that witnesses reported a cleric of Boccob stealing a rare book from the library. The city watch is asking around hoping for some leads in this case, but know little else about it.

If both thieves are killed before they can be questioned, Theldrat would still like his key returned. He suggests that the PCs ask around to find out if anyone saw who broke into the shop. In this case, a successful Gather Information check (DC 15) reveals that a messenger boy saw a scary-looking half-orc with a protruding tusk-like tooth capped with iron leave the shop early that morning. The messenger doesn't know Irontusk's name, but for the price of 1 gp, he tells the PCs that he's seen the half-orc in Barge End.

Barge End (El 3 + Variable)

The great city of Greyhawk comes to an abrupt end down by the Selintan River in a tumble of shacks, docks, and a few warehouses. The shouts of fishmongers, creaking of wagons, and the cacophony of shrieking gulls are everpresent here. Up ahead, the wide bank of the Selintan River is so crowded with boats, from simple fishing vessels to wide river gypsy barges, that it is nearly impossible to see the water at all unless one looks well away from shore.

Barge End is a tangled mess. Finding Irontusk is no easy task, even if the PCs know his name. Every hour they scour Barge End, the PCs may attempt a Gather Information skill check (DC 15) to determine where Irontusk is currently located. Alternately, the PCs could simply wander around the docks, hoping to catch a glimpse of a half-orc that matches his description. In this case, after 1d4+1 hours allow the PCs a Spot check (DC 12) to notice Irontusk; if they fail this check they can try again once per additional hour.

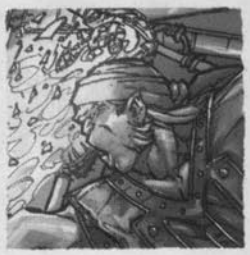
Irontusk is currently working on a barge (area **D6**) moored to a pier on the western shore of Barge End. The barge is wedged into its mooring by numerous other boats and barges, creating a floating chain of boats that extends out into the river where no pier space is available.

If the PCs found their way to Irontusk with a successful Gather Information check, they start at area **D1** and can immediately make Spot checks (DC 0, but remember to adjust the Spot checks by –1 per 10 feet of distance between the character and Irontusk) to see the half-orc at work at area **D6**. If the PCs were simply wandering around hoping to spot Irontusk, they start at area **D2** as they see the half-orc stand up after loading a crate.

Creatures: Irontusk regularly bullies a young halfling woman named Solnia (female halfling Exp2, Listen +11, Sense Motive +7) into keeping an eye out for him. Irontusk is fairly confident that no one saw him at Theldrat's shop, but he has nevertheless told Solina to watch for anyone who looks out of place and might be looking for him. She's currently working on the boat at area **D3**, and if she realizes the PCs are looking for someone (with a successful DC 20 Sense Motive check, or automatic if she hears the PCs talking about their goals), she quickly cries out to warn Irontusk. If the PCs first notice Irontusk by making their own Spot checks at area **D2**, Solnia notices them at the same time and cries out her warning to him immediately. Once she does so, she flees into the city.

Irontusk is rather crafty for a half-orc and does not intend to be captured easily. He drops his work and flees to the north, leaping from barge to boat to pier. His goal is to reach the small skiff at area **D12**. He is a six-foot tall half-orc with light olive-colored skin, numerous scars, and a large iron-capped tusk protruding from his lower lip. He dresses in finely crafted leather armor with iron studs. Over this he wears a ragged old fur cloak.

Irontusk, Male Half-orc Bbn2: CR 2; Medium humanoid (half-orc); HD 2d12+4; hp 20; Init +5; Spd 40 ft; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+4, club); SA Rage 1/day; SQ fast movement, illiteracy, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.



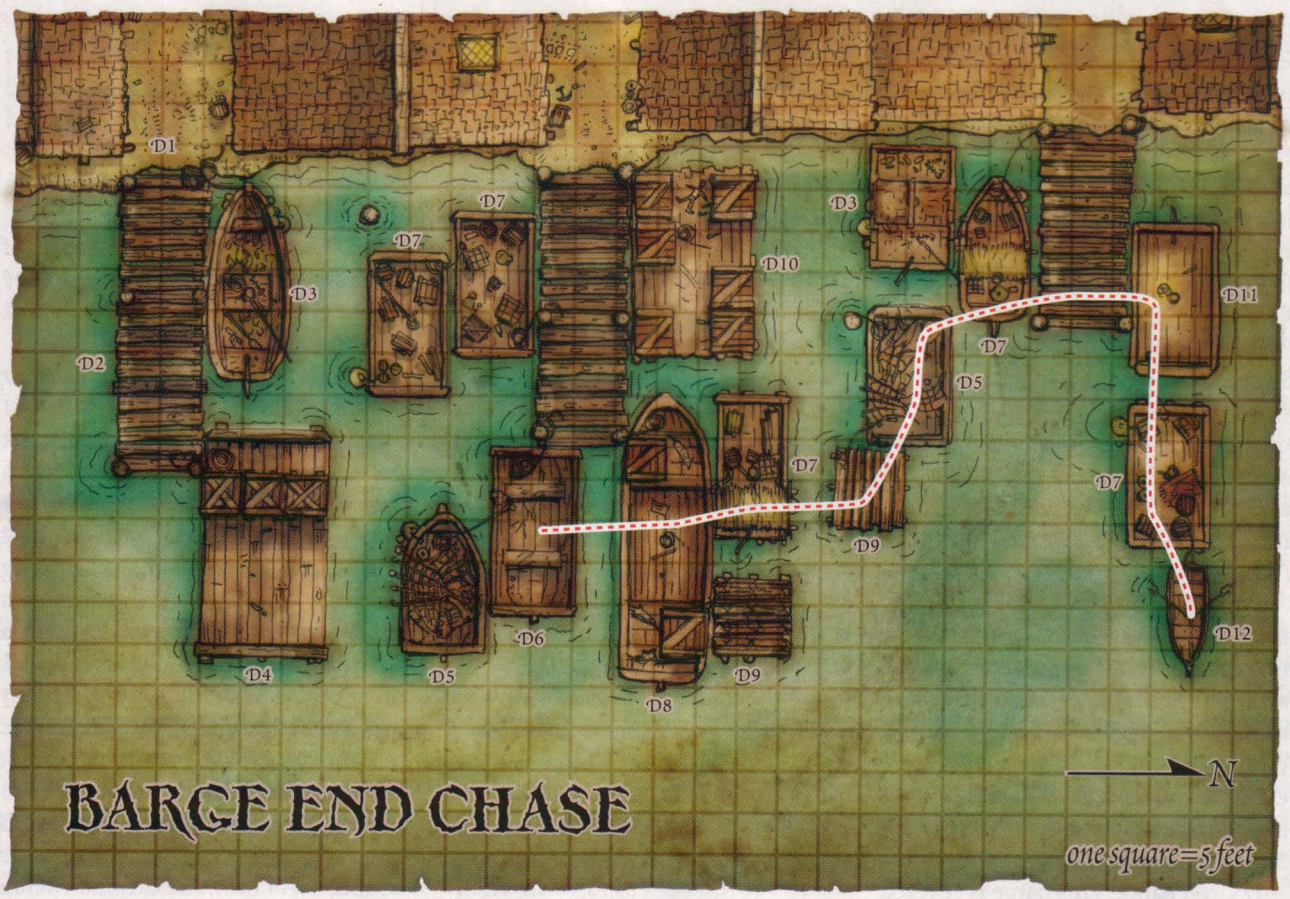
Rage: When Irontusk rages, his statistics change as follows—hp 24; AC 12, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Grp +7; Atk/Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+7, club); SV Fort +7, Will +2; Str 21, Con 18; Climb +12, Jump +14, Swim +12.

Skills: Climb +10, Intimidate +4, Jump +12, Swim +10.

Feats: Athletic, Improved Initiative.

Languages: Common, Orc.

Possessions: Club, masterwork studded leather armor, tanglefoot bag, belt pouch containing 79 gp,



ragged fur cloak, a crude map of the city that indicates the location of the Green Dagger Guildhouse, and 2 *potions of cure light wounds.*

Tactics: If the PCs catch up to Irontusk, he fights dirty. Some of his favored tactics include bull rushing characters off boats into the river, trying to trip them, or simply beating on them with his club.

Wharf Chase

Once Irontusk realizes he's been found out, he makes a mad dash for his personal skiff (area **D12**). The easiest way to run this chase scene is to have the PCs and Irontusk roll initiative and each move in order. Irontusk takes the most direct route to his skiff, as indicated by the dotted line on the map. Unless he's forced to stop and deal with obstacles or fight, he takes a double move action each round.

The water here is relatively calm and is ten feet deep. A swimming character must make a successful Swim check (DC 10) each round in order to move at up to one-half their speed (as a full-round action) or one-quarter their speed (as a move action). It's difficult to clamber into a boat or onto a barge from the water; to do so, a character must make a successful Climb check (DC 15). Each check, successful or not, costs 10 feet (2 squares) of movement. A character can rush this check by taking a –5 penalty on his Climb check to reduce the check's penalty to 5 feet (1 square).

The cluttered nature of the barges and boats, their rocking motion, and the moisture of the river counts as slippery light rubble, and adds +4 to all Balance and Tumble DCs. The DC for any Balance check called for in specific areas below already include this adjustment.

A character can move from boat to barge to pier without movement penalty if the two objects are close together. Otherwise, a character must make a Jump check to leap from one to another. Irontusk's Jump check is high enough that he automatically makes jumps of 5 feet or less; if allowed to progress along his favored escape route, he'll not have to make any more dangerous jumps.

Each of the buildings near the shore are single-floor structures with ten-foot-high walls; a PC could try to climb along these walls or over the roofs to catch up to Irontusk. Running along surface streets in an attempt to approach one of the more northern piers from the land is not the best tactic. Once a character moves off the map, it takes 4 rounds to move to the next pier to the north; thus, a character who moves from the southernmost pier to the northernmost one must wait 8 rounds before re-appearing on the map at the northernmost pier.

In addition to these obstacles, many of the barges have additional features that can delay someone. These obstacles affect Irontusk and the PCs equally. Finally, keep in mind that several other people are

going about their business here. They yell and curse at anyone who uses their boat to chase Irontusk, but unless they are attacked or a character remains on a boat for several rounds they don't get directly involved and their presence is little more than local color.

D1: The PCs start here if they used Gather Information to find Irontusk.

D2: The PCs start here if they used Spot to find Irontusk.

D3. Fisherman's boat: The floor of this boat is covered with slippery swaths of fish and fish parts. Anyone attempting to move across this boat must succeed at a Balance skill check (DC 14) or fall prone.

D4. Crate barge: A wall of crates filled with imported cloth bisects this barge. The crates are stacked to a height of 10 feet. Climbing the crates requires a successful Climb check (DC 15). Impatient characters can burst through the crates as a standard action with a successful Strength check (DC 20).

D5. Net barge: This barge is covered in loose fishing nets. Anyone moving through the nets at faster than half speed must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 15) or become entangled in the nets. An entangled person can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 12) made as a full-round action. The net has 5 hit points and can be burst with a DC 20 Strength check (also a full-round action).

D6. Shoddy boat: Irontusk begins at this boat, which is in very poor condition. Characters who jump onto this boat must make a successful Reflex save (DC 15) to prevent one of their feet from punching through the hull and into the water below. Small characters receive a +4 circumstance bonus on this roll. Freeing a foot from the boat is a move action that requires a successful Escape Artist check (DC 10). If the Reflex saving throw to avoid getting stuck is failed by more than 5, the character instead punches right through the bottom of the boat. This PC can either climb up into the boat through the hole or swim to the next nearest boat.

D7. Merchant barges: These barges contain a number of crates, small barrels, and cages. When a character boards a merchant barge, roll 1d6 and consult the following chart to determine what the barge is carrying.

Roll	Result
1	*Chickens*. When a PC lands here, the entire barge erupts in a five-foot radius cloud of feathers as dozens of chickens flutter madly in their cages. The cloud of feathers lasts for only 1d4 rounds, but for that time it obscures all sight. A creature 5 feet away has concealment, and creatures further away have total concealment.
2	*Rotten Fruit*. This barge has a sickly sweet stench to it. Anyone moving across the barge must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 12) or be sickened (the character takes a –2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks) for 1d3 rounds.
3	*Junk Heap*. Moving across this barge at any speed faster than half normal requires a successful Balance skill check (DC 15). Failure means the PC falls prone.
4	*Empty*. This barge has been emptied of all its goods and poses no additional hazard.
5	*Spider Cage*. This barge is protected by a single caged Small monstrous spider. A character that boards this barge is targeted by the spider's web attack (*Monster Manual* 288). The spider can't actually bite a character unless he is foolish enough to approach the cage. This result occurs only once. **Small Monstrous Spider**: hp 4, *Monster Manual* 288.
6	*Trapped* (EL 1). This barge has a rudimentary trap built into it to punish thieves. A successful Search skill check (DC 15) of the barge discovers a secret panel, under which is hidden a leather tube containing a scroll of *levitate* (caster level 3). This result occurs only once. **Arrow Trap**: CR 1; mechanical; proximity trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 ranged (1d6/×3, arrow); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

D8. Watchdogs (EL 1): A trio of watchdogs protects this barge. They attack anyone other than Irontusk who dares to board.

Dogs (3): hp 6 each; *Monster Manual* 271.

D9. Small Raft: These small rafts are safe as long as no more than two Small or one Medium creature is on board. Exceeding this limit causes the raft to sink, dumping everyone on it into the water next to the raft unless they succeed at a Balance check (DC 15). This check must be made each round until only two Small or one Medium creature remains on the raft, at which point it returns to the surface.

D10. Drunken Sailor (EL 1): If anyone boards this barge or passes within 5 feet of it, the drunken sailor passed out amongst its crates awakens. The sailor is loud and belligerent, and opposes anyone who tries to jump onto or move around on his barge. If he takes any lethal damage, the fight goes out of him and he retreats as quickly as possible.

Drunken Sailor, Male Human Exp2: CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d6+2; hp 10; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk +3 melee (1d3+2, unarmed strike); SQ drunk; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 12.

Drunk (Ex): The drunken sailor takes a –2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks.

Skills: Balance +5, Climb +7, Jump +7, Profession (sailor) +7, Spot +4, Swim +7, Use Rope +5.

Feats: Improved Unarmed Strike, Skill Focus (Profession—sailor).

Languages: Common

Possessions: Empty grog bottle.

D11. Burning Boat (EL 1): If he reaches this empty merchant barge, Irontusk spends a move action to knock over a pair of burning lanterns tied to a pole near the middle of this boat. The boat immediately begins to burn heartily. Anyone who crosses through the flames takes 1d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 10 halves).

D12. Escape Boat: Irontusk owns this small boat, and it's his destination during the chase. Upon reaching this boat, he begins untying it. To untie the boat, he must make a successful Use Rope check (DC 10) as a full-round action. Once he casts off, Irontusk begins rowing away at a speed of 20 (moving 40 feet per round). After five rounds of rowing, he manages to row behind a line of moored barges and likely escapes.

Developments: If Irontusk escapes the heroes he leaves the city, heading toward the town of Maraven west of Greyhawk. The PCs have a chance to catch him along the way, as he travels by foot. The details of this pursuit are left to the DM. Should Irontusk die, the only clue the heroes have to the location of the key is a small map scribbled on a scrap of parchment in his belt pouch. This map details how to get to the Green Dagger Guildhouse, but offers no indication of what manner of building it is.

If he's captured, Irontusk is very hesitant to tell the heroes anything. His initial attitude is unfriendly, and unless the PCs can use Diplomacy or Intimidate to make him at least friendly (DC 25) he won't say a word. If the PCs promise to let him go after they interrogate him, they gain a +4 circumstance bonus on the Diplomacy or Intimidate check. Alternately, a bribe of at least 100 gp is enough to convince him to talk.

Once he starts talking, Irontusk spares no detail. Two days ago, a group of thugs calling themselves the Green Dagger Gang hired him to steal a plain copper key from the locksmith's shop. The gang offered him 100 gp for the task. He delivered the key to them early this morning and got his gold (some of which he has already lost gambling). He only met two members of the gang. One of them was real sick, and the other was a rich-looking elf. They were dressed in black, but had little green dagger pins on their cloaks. The gang lives in an old merchant house in the River Quarter. Irontusk still has the map he scrawled to remind himself how to get back to the guildhouse to collect his payment. He gladly hands it over to the PCs if they ask for directions.

Chapter Two: The Green Dagger Gang

Located in Greyhawk's River Quarter, the Green Dagger Gang's hideout is a run-down, two-story merchant house. The gang moved into the building three months ago and has been trying to build up enough of a reputation to make a bid with the city's infamous Thieves Guild. As of yet, they have performed a few minor robberies, a beating or two, and one act of arson. Two weeks ago, some of their junior members contracted blinding sickness. Their leader, a young elf named Cyrathas, isolated the sickened members but still the disease spread. Not realizing that the sickness was being deliberately inflicted on his men by the cult of Vecna, Cyrathas assumed that the disease was contagious and began to panic. Just two days ago, he was approached by Veltargo, a cleric of Vecna disguised as a cleric of Boccob. Veltargo offered to heal the Green Dagger Gang in exchange for a simple deed: the theft of Theldrat's key. Unfortunately, with most of the members of the Green Dagger Gang sick, blinded, or dead, Cyrathas' only choice was to get outside help to retrieve the key. He contracted Irontusk to steal the key only two days ago. Early this morning, after retrieving the key from Irontusk, Cyrathas turned the key over to Veltargo, who gave him a cure for the disease in the form of several "potions." Unfortunately for the Green Daggers, this "cure" is a fake.

Green Dagger Guildhouse

At the end of a dead end avenue, a large two-story building sits abandoned. The windows are boarded up, the walls sag, and the roof is riddled with holes. A modest stable is located underneath an overhang of the building, and the second floor contains a large outdoor porch. This part of the River Quarter has many buildings like this, some of which provide shelter for the poor and homeless, but this one looks truly abandoned. Certainly this building was once a grand merchant house, but now it is no more than an empty wreck.

Most of the hideout is lit with torches unless otherwise noted. The walls of the hideout are wooden and broken plaster. The doors are all strong wooden doors, and are one of the few features of the hideout that are well maintained. The doors are not locked unless otherwise noted. The windows are boarded up from the outside and inside, and should be treated as walls.

Wooden Door: 1 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 13.

G1. Front Door

Although the rest of the building is in shambles, the front door looks relatively new. The iron fittings and door handle show no signs of tarnish or rust. All is quiet in the front yard of the manor.

Knocking on the door receives no reply, but it does alert the gang. A simple alarm that rings a bell in area **G3** is built into the door. Although not technically a trap, it can be detected (Search check DC 20) and disarmed (Disable Device DC 15) in a similar manner. If activated, the gang members prepare as best they can for trouble.

Front Door: 1-1/2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 16; Open Lock DC 20.

G2. Covered Stables (El 2)

Nestled below a broad overhang, the stables do not appear to be in use. Four stalls stand empty, their floors covered in old straw and filth. A small door hides in the shadowy recesses of this overhang.

The door is barricaded from the inside by a large pile of ruined furniture.

Barricaded Wooden Door: 1 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 16.

Creatures: These stalls are not quite deserted. A trio of stirges nest in the easternmost stall and flies out to attack the PCs if disturbed. Once sated of blood, the stirges alight to the roof to digest their meal.

Stirges (3): hp 5; *Monster Manual* 236.

G3. Entry Hall

Two sputtering torches in rusty brackets provide only dim light in what must have once been a grand entry hall. Even now, the fine wall frescos depicting the city of Greyhawk are still visible beneath a thick layer of grime and dust. On the far wall, above a pair of rotten double doors, is a crudely painted dagger done in bright green paint. Two other doors, one half open, are the only other features of this trash-ridden chamber.

Two small peepholes in the walls of this chamber allow creatures in area **G10** to observe this room. A successful Search check (DC 20) made along the east wall uncovers the peepholes. If the alarm in area **G1** hasn't been triggered, a successful Listen check (DC 20) allows someone to hear muffled snoring coming from the east; these are the snores of the guard in area **G10**.

G4. Krenshar Kennel (El 1)

The heavy stench of wet fur hangs in the air of what must have once served as a lavish sitting room for visitors. Two alcoves featuring large stone statues of a portly merchant flank the doorway. The room beyond is in complete disarray. Once fine furniture is piled into a broken heap in the center of the room atop a soiled rug. Faint light filters through boarded-up windows on the far side of the room.

The secret door in the west wall is little more than a normal door hidden behind a faded tapestry, and can be located with a successful Search check (DC 15).

Creature: The leader of the Green Dagger Gang keeps a pet krenshar locked away in this room. The krenshar spends most of the day sleeping but is awake at night. Of course, if the alarm at area **G1** is triggered, the beast is awake and hungry.

Krenshar: hp 15; *Monster Manual* 163.

Treasure: A small painting of a foreign harbor hangs on the northern wall. Although the painting itself is of little value (as it is poorly done), the dusty silver frame is worth 100 gp.

G5. Dead Guard Chamber

A human corpse dressed in simple leathers is slumped against the far wall of this room, a crossbow draped across his lap. The corpse's eyes are swollen shut.

This rogue was stationed in this room when the blinding sickness robbed him of his strength. Blinded and too weak to call out for help, he slowly died of dehydration. Since blinding sickness is contracted by ingestion, chances are slim for catching the disease from the body.

Treasure: The body wears leather armor, and the light crossbow on his lap is still functional. A belt pouch at his side contains 18 gp.

G6. Junk Room

This chamber is so choked with broken furniture and garbage that the door cannot be opened all the way. Anyone who falls through the southern trap door in area **G19** lands in this broken mess. The junk in this room counts as dense rubble (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 60).

G7. Mess Hall

A long table dominates the center of this chamber, surrounded by a number of patchwork chairs. A few cracked plates and moldy scraps of food litter the tabletop, which has been marked with a crude dagger shape in green paint.

A poorly hidden secret doorway concealed in the northwestern corner of this now unused room can be found with a successful Search check (DC 10).

Characters who fall through the northern pit trap in area **G19** are dumped unceremoniously onto the floor just north of the table.

G8. Kitchen

Pungent odor wafts out of what must be the kitchen. A large worktable covered with rotten food and haunted by swarms of flies lurks against the west wall, and a cold fire pit stands in the corner next to a heap of dirty pots and clay crocks.

None of the Green Dagger Gang has prepared a meal or brought fresh food in over a week. On a narrow shelf above the fire pit rests a small box of six tindertwigs.

G9. Sick Barracks (El 1)

This wide chamber is clear of debris and filth. Three large wooden double bunks take up half the room, while a pair of practice dummies and straw targets dominate the other half. The foul odor of sickness is deep in this room, the source made evident by the bodies sprawled in the bunks.

This hidden chamber is used as a barracks and training room by the junior members of the Green Dagger Gang. Aside from the training dummies and targets, there are also a variety of complex locks built

into the wall along with a number of typical trap triggers to practice on.

Creatures: Five junior gang members occupy this room. One languishes deep in a coma while the other four are near blind and weak from blinding sickness. They only rise to fight the PCs if they are themselves attacked.

These victims took some of the fake antidote, but it has obviously not cured them. If interrogated, the thugs feebly threaten the PCs, warning them that the boss'll kill them for invading the hideout. The thugs know nothing about the missing key or Irontusk. They do know that the gang fell sick nearly two weeks ago and that they will die soon if not cured.

Diseased Green Dagger Junior Gang Members, Human Exp1 (4): CR 1/4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d6; hp 4; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp –2; Atk/Full Atk –2 melee (1d4–2/19–20, dagger); AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 12 (currently 6), Dex 14, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +2, Disable Device +6, Hide +8, Jump +2, Move Silent +8, Open Lock +6, Search +4.

Feats: Dodge, Stealthy.

Languages: Common.

Possessions: Dagger.

Treasure: At the foot of each bunk bed sits a wooden chest. Two are unlocked and full of clothes. The third is locked (Open Lock DC 20) and contains more clothes, as well as a small pouch containing two clay vials of alchemist fire and an iron flask containing a *potion of invisibility*.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If good-aligned PCs see to it that the thugs are cured, they gain experience points as if they had defeated the thugs in combat.

G10. Guard Room (EL 1)

A small chair sits next to the far wall of this guardroom, facing a small peephole in the wall.

Creature: A rogue named Daylin is stationed here. Although infected with blinding sickness, he is still fairly healthy and keeps an eye on area **G3**. If alerted, he hides in the corner next to the door to strike at the first person to enter the room.

Daylin, Male Half-elf Rog1: CR 1; Medium humanoid (half-elf); HD 1d6+1; hp 5; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ immunity to *sleep*, low-light vision, trapfinding; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 14 (currently 12), Dex 16, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +5, Hide +7, Jump +5, Listen +8, Move Silent +7, Spot +8, Tumble +7.

Feats: Alertness.

Languages: Common.

Possessions: Leather armor, rapier, smokestick, *potion of remove fear*.

G11. Storage Room (EL 1)

The door leading into this chamber is trapped. The chamber beyond the door is the primary storage room for the gang.

A table stacked with numerous other objects sits before a pair of weapon racks and three suits of leather armor.

Trap: Opening the door to this room causes a large spiked iron sphere to rumble down a hidden chute and drop down upon the head of whoever triggered the trap.

Spiked Iron Sphere Trap: CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 melee (2d6); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

Treasure: The weapon racks contain 3 rapiers, 8 daggers, 2 light crossbows, 1 masterwork rapier, and 1 masterwork longsword. Stacked on the table are 2 sets of thieves' tools, 2 vials of acid, 2 smokesticks, 2 vials of alchemist fire, 2 bags of caltrops, 50 ft. of silk rope, and a grappling hook.

G12. Privy

This, the only privy in the manor, shows signs of recent use. There is little else of interest here.

G13. Grand Staircase (EL 3)

On the far side of this room, a grand staircase rises up to the second floor of the manor. A gilded chandelier hangs from the ceiling, covered in cobwebs and dust.

Creature: Dalta Gwyn, one of the more skilled members of the Green Daggers, keeps watch in this chamber.

Dalta Gwyn, Female Human Rog1/Ftr1: CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d6+1 plus 1d10+1; hp 13; Init +4; Spd 30 ft; AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1/18–20, masterwork rapier) or +6 ranged (1d8+1, light crossbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+1/18–20, rapier) or +6 ranged (1d8+1/19–20, light crossbow); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ trapfinding; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +5, Disable Device +4, Hide +8, Jump +5, Listen +4, Move Silent +8, Open Lock +8, Ride +8, Search +5, Spot +4, Tumble +8.

Feats: Dodge, Mobility, Weapon Finesse (rapier).

Languages: Common, Elven.

Possessions: Masterwork rapier, light crossbow, 10 *+1 crossbow bolts*, leather armor, *+1 heavy wooden shield*, 10 gp.

Tactics: If Dalta knows the PCs are in the house, she positions herself to ambush them by taking up a position at the top of the western stairs. The rope that suspends the 10-ft.-radius chandelier is affixed to a hook on the wall here; she can cut the rope as a standard action. Anyone below the falling chandelier takes 2d6 points of damage (Reflex half DC 12). Once she drops the chandelier, she continues to attack anyone in the lower portion of the room with her crossbow.

Trap: The western rise of the staircase is trapped; all of its supports have been nearly cut through. Any weight placed on these stairs causes them to collapse.

Collapsing Stairway: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; DC 15 Reflex save avoids (2d6, fall); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 23.

G14. Hallway

A blue threadbare rug lies on the floor of this hallway, and grimy chairs sit against the walls. Strips of cloth have been used to cover a door to the east.

The doors to areas **G17** and **G18** are locked (Open Lock DC 20).

G15. Spider Closet (EL 1)

The door to this room has been sealed with strips of cloth in a desperate attempt to keep the spiders inside from further infesting the house.

This unfurnished room is thick with writhing sheets of dusty cobwebs.

Creatures: A swarm of spiders nests inside this closet, feeding on the pigeons that often roost on the building's roof. They swarm out to attack anyone foolish enough to open the door.

Spider Swarm: hp 9; *Monster Manual* 239.

G16. PLANNING ROOM

A large map of the River Quarter sits on a table in the center of this room, next to two large ledgers. The walls are free of cracks and look recently painted. The floor is clean and the furniture is free of dust and filth.

The relatively accurate map shows the city's River Quarter. Nothing on the map is particularly marked or noted. Both ledgers are written in Common. One of them details the expenses and purchases of the gang. The second ledger has a small lock on the cover (Open Lock DC 15). Inside is a daily log of the gang's activities. Study of this ledger reveals that the gang stopped working almost two weeks ago. It also indicates that Irontusk was hired to perform a mission for an individual referred to as "the healer." At the end of the ledger, a list of the gang members indicates who's "infected" and who's "dead."

G17. Senior Barracks

The door leading into this chamber is locked (Open Lock DC 20).

Two bunk beds are pushed against the far wall of this chamber, with a large table between them. A wooden wardrobe stands next to the door.

This room is used by Daylin, Dalta, and the Tyran twins. Within the wardrobe are a number of different disguise outfits, including those of a noble, an entertainer, a peasant, and a scholar.

Treasure: A small coffer in the wardrobe contains 3 small emeralds worth 100 gp each.

G18. Second Floor Walkway

A walkway between two porches runs along the central roof of the mansion.

The walkway's sides are fenced in with wrought iron bars, and a large number of pigeons nest in the eaves above, their feathers and droppings littering the boards below.

Booth doors leading off the walkway are locked (Open Lock DC 20). A character who tries to climb up to this walkway from the street below must first clamber up to the nearby roof (Climb DC 15) and must then climb over the iron bars, which the Green Daggers have greased with nasty-smelling oil (Climb DC 20). Alternately, a character can try to bash through the bars, although the noise this generates quickly alerts the gang.

Iron Trellis: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28.

G19. Chamber Of Veils (El 3)

Small wooden pillars spaced at five-foot intervals reach from floor to ceiling in this room. Between them, veils of green cloth are hung, throwing the bulk of the room into a lush, writhing haze.

The walls of this chamber are covered in hanging green cloth, just like the veils, hiding the door leading out of this chamber. Discovering the door requires a successful Search check (DC 20, this drops to DC 10 if the cloth is moved).

The green veils provide concealment. If one veil separates a pair of characters, both have concealment (20% miss chance). If two veils separate a pair of characters, the two have total concealment (50% miss chance). The veils are fairly easy to destroy, but in the time the PCs take to rip them down the creatures in the room can do a significant amount of damage.

Hanging Veil: Hardness 0; hp 1; Break DC 5.

Creatures: Cyrathas' loyal bodyguards are stationed in this chamber. These twin halfling sisters have set up this room to utilize their combat style to best effect.

Tisa and Risa Tyran, Female Halfling Rog1 (2): CR 1; Small humanoid (halfling); HD 1d6+1; hp 6; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0; Grp –3; Atk/Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+1/19–20, masterwork short sword); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ trapfinding; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1 (+3 against fear); Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +7, Hide +11, Jump +1, Listen +6, Move Silent +9, Spot +4, Tumble +7, Use Rope +7.

Feats: Combat Reflexes.

Languages: Common, Halfling.

Possessions: Masterwork short sword, leather armor, 2 *potions of cure light wounds*.

Tactics: In combat, the twins try not to assault the PCs at the same time. While one attacks, the other positions for a quick strike. Their goal is to have the appearance of a single combatant who appears to run off to one side of the room only to suddenly strike from another. Since both are dressed and armed identically, their ruse can only be detected with a successful Spot check (DC 15). They also call out taunts and hoots as they fight, which alerts Cyrathas in area **G21** to the trouble.

Traps: Located at two different locations within the maze of veils are a pair of pit traps that dump whoever steps upon them down to the ground floor.

Pit Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids (1d6, fall); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 20.

G20. Waiting Room

Flanking a door to the southeast are a chair and a pull cord hanging from the ceiling. A small brass pipe ending in a horn emerges from the wall next to the cord.

The door leading into area **G21** is locked (Open Lock DC 25). The pull cord rings a bell in area **G21** when pulled; anyone who does so alerts Cyrathas of their presence in this room. The brass pipe and horn are a speaking tube that those in this room can use to speak to those in area **G21**. The PCs could use this tube to try to convince Cyrathas to unlock the door and help them, but in order to do so they'll need to adjust his current attitude from hostile to at least friendly with a Diplomacy or Intimidate check (DC 35), at which point he may be willing to listen to reason.

G21. Cyrathas's Court

This wide chamber is both spacious and grand. Rich new tapestries hang from the walls, expensive woven rugs cover the floor, and a gilded throne sits opposite you inlaid with silver and gold on rich wood.

Creature: This room is Cyrathas's private sanctum, where he meets with the leaders of rival gangs and holds court over his own band of ruffians. Although they appear richly decorated, most of the expensive trappings here are cheap fakes.

Cyrathas is a tall lean elf, with neatly cropped blond hair pulled back behind his head. He wears finely made clothes of rich blues and greens, inlaid with semiprecious gemstones. Cyrathas is cold, calculating, and completely self-serving, having spent much of his life on the streets of Greyhawk. He's convinced the PCs are assassins sent by a rival gang, and suspects they may also be responsible for infecting his ruffians with the sickness.

Cyrathas, Male Elf Rog1/Sor2: CR 3; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 1d6+1 plus 2d4+2; hp 13; Init +8; Spd 30 ft; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/19–20, masterwork short sword) or +6 ranged (1d6+1/×3, *+1 shortbow*); SA sneak attack +1d6, spells; SQ summon familiar, trapfinding; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills: Bluff +7, Concentration +5, Diplomacy +7, Hide +8, Listen +9, Move Silent +8, Search +2, Sense Motive +5, Spot +9, Tumble +8.

Feats: Alertness (as long as Milta is in arm's reach), Combat Casting, Improved Initiative.

Languages: Common, Elven.

Spells Known (6/5; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*daze, detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, ray of frost*; 1st—*burning hands, shield.*

Familiar: Rat named Milta.

Equipment: Masterwork short sword, *+1 shortbow*, 20 arrows, *bracers of armor +1, cloak of resistance +1*, 4 vials of lamp oil, 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds, wand of grease* (1st level caster, 20 charges), 80 gp.

Tactics: If Cyrathas knows the PCs are coming, he covers the area within 15 feet of the door with lamp oil. He then lights a candle and uses *mage hand* to hold the candle above the oil, directly in the view of the PCs when they enter. Characters within five feet of the oiled area can notice the oil-soaked floor with a successful Spot skill check (DC 10). Should any of the PCs advance toward him or attempt to get past the oil area, he drops the candle.

Once the oil is lit, every character in the burning area takes 1d3 points of fire damage per round (Reflex DC 15 half). After two rounds of burning, the flames die out. In the meantime, Cyrathas uses *burning hands* liberally after casting *shield*. He tries to avoid melee as long as possible. If reduced to fewer than 5 hit points, he begs for his life.

Treasure: A small locked chest (Open Lock DC 25) hidden behind the throne holds a number of valuable items. The chest contains a small black velvet bag containing four large sapphires worth 100 gp each, 3 scrolls of *identify*, 1 scroll of *bull's strength*, 5 *sleep arrows*, 4 *potions of cure light wounds*, and a *hand of the mage*. Cyrathas' diary is also stashed in the chest; its contents are detailed below.

Development: If captured, Cyrathas can tell the PCs all of the information contained within his diary, and does so gratefully if he thinks the information will gain him his life or freedom.

This diary details the gang's criminal activities, but its haughty tone changes with an entry dated two weeks ago. Cyrathas writes of the first gang members growing ill with blinding sickness. The next entry was made only two days ago. It describes how a cleric named Veltargo approached the Green Daggers and offered them a cure for the disease, but only if they would steal Theldrat's key and deliver it to the cleric. Veltargo is described as a thin balding human cleric of Boccob, but Cyrathas notes the cleric's vestments were rather filthy, his jet black fingernails were crusted with dirt, and his teeth were unusually crooked. The entry goes on to discuss Irontusk's involvement and his delivery of the key.

The final entry was made earlier today. The cleric of Boccob delivered what he claimed was a cure for blinding sickness, took the key, and left. Aside from mentioning the fact that the cleric had a large book with him on this visit, there is nothing more to be learned from the diary.

Interlude: On The Key's Trail

Once the PCs have defeated the Green Dagger Gang and learned that the key was delivered to a cleric, they should have time to rest and recover from their adventures. Now would also be a good time to award experience points. During the next few days, there are several places the PCs can go to learn more about what happened to the key and the mysterious cleric of Boccob described in the diary. Two places in particular yield promising clues—the Great Library of Greyhawk and the Temple of Boccob.

The PCs may also approach the city watch in an attempt to secure their aid. Unfortunately, the city watch has little time to listen to the PCs, and unless they can adjust one of their attitudes from indifferent to helpful, they'll be told that the watch has everything under control and to mind their own business. Even if they can get their attention, the watch is backlogged with other problems and they won't be able to address the PCs' issues for several days, if not weeks. If anything is to be done soon, it is up to the PCs.

The Great Library Of Greyhawk

Sitting on the edge of the city, just inside the wall, is an old building with the aspect of an ancient fortress. Large stone columns support a heavy stone lintel over an entry flanked by weathered stone statues of scholars holding open books before them in praise. A grand stone staircase rises up from the street to the level of the statues. Two men stand at the head of the stairs, their arms folded and gazes set.

The PCs may visit the Great Library for a number of reasons. It's certainly one of the best places to research information in the city, and once the PCs learn that the cleric of Boccob was carrying a large book they might come to theorize that the mysterious cleric who stole the key also stole the book from the Library. In any case, the library is currently closed to the public. The two men posted in front of the entrance are charged with making sure no one enters the building until the stolen book is recovered.

If the PCs approach, they are greeted by one of these men: Geraal Wistroan (male human Exp5, Sense Motive +7). Geraal is a young scholar positioned here by the head librarian, Iquander, to keep visitors out. Inside, the library swarms with officers of the city watch looking for clues to the robbery.

If the PCs tell Geraal that they may have some information about the missing book and manage to adjust his attitude from indifferent to friendly with Diplomacy or Intimidate checks (DC 15), he can give them some interesting information. It turns out that the valuable book was stolen just before the library opened. The only witness, a young scholar who had been up all night, reports seeing a cleric dressed in the vestments of Boccob leaving the library at a dead run with the missing book clutched to his chest. This tome has long lurked in one of the rare book rooms of the library, its pages a mystery to all for its clasp is held by a magic lock that defies all attempts to open it. Unfortunately, the scholar did not get a direct look at the thief. After diving out an open window, the thief ran off into the city and has not been seen since.

The Temple Of Boccob

Located deep within Greyhawk's Clerksburg district, a bustling quarter of universities, boarding houses, and cathedrals, the Temple of Boccob is a stately structure of clean marble and simple decoration. Emblazoned above the main entry is a faintly glowing blue eye contained within a pentagram, the All-Seeing Eye of Boccob the Uncaring, god of magic.

A squad of city watchmen is here, questioning the clerics of Boccob individually about the theft at the library last night. PCs who ask questions are asked to wait in a rather lavish sitting room for about an hour before Altamaic the Calm (human male Clr2), a junior member of the clergy, comes to speak with them.

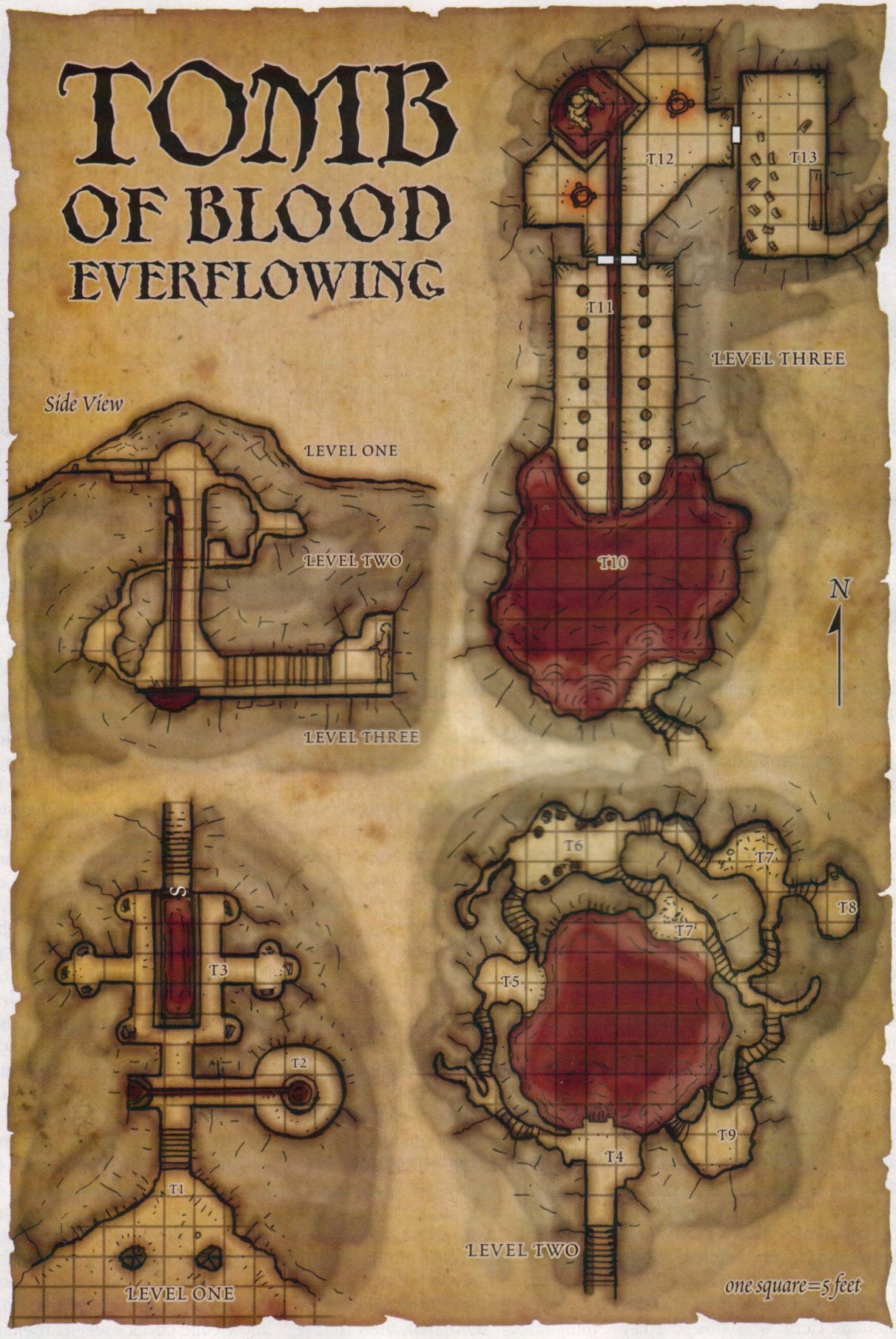
If the PCs accuse a cleric of Boccob of theft, Altamaic tells the PCs that no member of the clergy could possibly be responsible for this crime. If the PCs present Cyrathas's diary or describe the cleric who took the key, Altamaic grows pale and reveals a bit more information. He admits that he was robbed on his way back to the temple about a month ago. Although his coin purse was not taken, the ruffian demanded his vestments, holy symbol, and robes. The robber was thin, balding, with crooked teeth and a foul stench. During the struggle, Altamaic pulled a stone pendant from around the neck of his assailant. Altamaic reported this to the city watch, but they paid him little heed since it seemed to have nothing to do with the book's theft.

Altamaic soon grows certain that the man who robbed him is the same that robbed the library and the same man who now has Theldrat's key. If the PCs agree to return the stolen book to the library if they find it, Altamaic gives them the stone pendant he tore from his assailant to assist in their search.

The Stone Pendant

The stone pendant Altamaic gives the PCs is made of blood red marble in the shape of a clenched fist squeezing out a drop of blood. On the back of the pendant is a series of small irregular bumps that act as a key to open the deeper portions of the tomb that the cult of Vecna uses as a base.

A successful bardic knowledge or Knowledge (history) check (DC 15) reveals that the pendant is as a "cairn charm," a stone often hung inside of the tombs found in the Cairn Hills nearby to ward off evil spirits. Each of these pendants are unique to specific cairns. If the knowledge check exceeds the target


TOMB
OF BLOOD
EVERFLOWING
T12
T13
T11
LEVEL THREE
T10
N
Side View
LEVEL ONE
LEVEL TWO
LEVEL THREE
T6
T7
T8
T7
T5
T9
T4
LEVEL TWO
S
T3
T2
T1
LEVEL ONE
one square=5 feet

DC by 10, the character knows that this one comes from a cairn called the Tomb of Blood Everflowing, an obscure cairn nonetheless not too far from the city. A successful Knowledge (local) check (DC 15) reveals that these cairns are often used by bandits, cultists, and other ruffians as hideouts.

The PCs can also learn this information by researching or hiring a local sage. Doing the research themselves is cheaper (and costs only 1d10 gp), but it takes 2d4 days before the PC uncovers the story behind the charm. Hiring a sage to research the charm costs 50 gp, but only requires a few hours of time.

Directions to the Tomb of Blood Everflowing are difficult to come by. Without a successful bardic knowledge or Knowledge (geography) check (DC 20), the PCs must research this information themselves or hire a sage, with the same costs and times as detailed above.

Chapter Three: Tomb Of Blood Everflowing

The journey from Greyhawk City to the Tomb of Blood Everflowing is just over 30 miles to the north. Finding the tomb poses no real difficulty to someone who's researched its location, as the above-ground portion of the tomb is marked with a pair of blood-red obelisks arrayed before an opening in the side of a barren hillside.

The tomb's depths originally held a shrine to Wee Jas, but it had long since fallen into disrepair by the time Veltargo and his cultists discovered the location. They repaired the shrine and rededicated it to the worship of Vecna, and have since used the location as a base of operations for their evil plots. The majority of the chambers in the tomb are unlit. Ceiling height averages 8 feet in hallways, typically rising to 12 to 15 feet in rooms. Worked stone walls are of masonry, while the cavern walls are solid limestone. The few doors in the tomb are made of stone and cannot be locked.

T1. Cairn Entrance

A pair of blood red stone obelisks flanks a dark hole in the hillside ahead. No trees grow on the hill's jagged top and no animals call this place home. The air is still and quiet but smells deeply of copper. The open entrance of the cairn contains a simple marble staircase going down.

A successful Survival skill check (DC 15) by a PC with the Track feat reveals that this area is heavily traveled; several humanoid tracks passed in and out of the entrance as recently as a few hours ago.

T2. Chamber Of The Eternal Wound

A two-foot-tall well sits in the center of this room. What looks like it could only be blood pours from a stone skull mounted in the ceiling, filling the well completely. The blood overflow pours through a spout into a channel in the floor that runs down the hallway to a pool at the opposite end of the corridor. Further adding to the mystery of the room are the walls, which are carved with writing in some ancient language.

The blood pouring from the roof is magic, and radiates a moderate necromantic aura. The blood is a manifestation of the spirits of ancient Suel necromancers who settled in this region ages ago. While unsettling, the blood is harmless.

The writings on the walls are in an archaic form of the Suel language. Charactes who do speak this language can read the writings with a successful Decipher Script check (DC 15); otherwise, magic is required. The words are a list of regal names of ancient Suloise nobles.

T3. Hall Of Slumber

Soft burbling sounds echo off the walls of this large chamber. Recessed into a small niche in each corner is a ruined stone sarcophagus, its contents looted. Two small corridors to the east and west lead to additional alcoves, each containing a similarly violated sarcophagus. A long pool of churning blood dominates the center of the room.

This tomb has been pilfered many times over; nothing valuable remains. A successful Survival check (DC 10) by a PC with the Track feat reveals bloody footprints leading to and from the southern end of the pool of blood. The walls of the chamber are decorated with ancient murals depicting a funeral procession, over which graffiti such as "Orcs smell bad," "All praise Iuz," and "Brendigund is a fool" are scrawled.

On the north wall of the chamber, just above the pool of blood, are a series of irregular indentations. These indentations are identical to the bumps on the back of the pendant given to the PCs by Altamaic the Calm. If the pendant is placed against the indentations and then turned, a submerged secret door in the north wall of the pool opens, allowing the blood to drain down a flight of stairs into area **T4**. The secret door closes in one minute, and the blood pool refills over the course of five minutes.

T4. Blood Falls (El 2)

The heavy scent of blood taints the air as the short corridor opens into a large ledge at the top of a vast open pit. This natural chasm drops over one hundred feet to an underground lake of blood below. Countless skulls line the walls of the pit shaft, each of which drains a torrent of blood into the lake in frothing red coils. Off to the left a small corridor slopes down into the darkness. A small shelf in the wall near the entrance to this corridor contains several small objects; immediately above the shelf the bloody fist rune of the tomb is carved into the wall, its face marked with several indentations.

The shelf contains six spare cairn charms the cultists use for access

into and out of the tomb. A charm pressed against the rune opens the secret door and allows the blood to drain into the lake while the operator stands in the hallway, safe from the sudden torrent of blood.

Creatures: The cult of Vecna has placed a number of guardians in the caves that descend around the tomb's central pit to keep intruders from invading their private sanctum. The first of these guardians are three human commoner zombies, each of which is missing a hand and an eye in honor of the cult's lich-god. The zombies attack anyone who doesn't openly wear the symbol of Vecna—an open hand palming an eyeball.

Human Commoner Zombies (3): hp 16; *Monster Manual* 266.

T5. Say Your Prayers (EL 2)

The passageway widens into a ledge overlooking the vast blood pit. Across the chamber is a crude symbol of an open-palmed hand with an eye at its center painted on the wall above another passageway.

The crude symbol is a reminder to the cultists to say their prayers before leaving this chamber. A successful Knowledge (religion) check (DC 10) recognizes the symbol as the unholy symbol of Vecna.

Trap: Anyone who exits this room toward area **T6** without first saying a prayer to Vecna triggers a *sound burst* trap centered in the opening.

Sound Burst **Trap**: CR 2; spell; spell trigger; repair reset; spell effect (*sound burst*, 3rd-level cleric, 1d8 + stun for one round, DC 13 negates the stun); multiple targets (all targets within 10 ft.); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

T6. Preparation Chamber

Dim torchlight illuminates a junk-strewn chamber. Crates and barrels are stacked haphazardly along the wall. On the far side of the chamber a pair of corridors lead into darkness. Between them is a heap of clothes along with an open barrel.

The crates and barrels along the wall come from merchant raids sponsored by the cultists. They contain raw iron ore, finished horseshoes, spoiled cider, stale bread, and a crate of leatherworking tools.

T7. Undead Guardians (EL 2)

Both of these caverns are empty, and are used by the cultists as guard posts.

Creatures: Each of these caverns contains a group of four zombie humans, set to guard here by the cult of Vecna. Like the zombies in area **T4**, these zombies are missing a hand and an eye, and attack anyone who doesn't openly wear Vecna's unholy symbol.

Human Commoner Zombies (4): hp 16; *Monster Manual* 266.

T8. Forgotten Tomb

This small chamber contains a stone sarcophagus inlaid with silver. The lid lies on its side before the now empty sarcophagus. The face carved into the stone of the lid depicts an imperious nobleman. A symbol of a skull in a halo of flame is carved at the head and foot of the sarcophagus.

A successful Knowledge (religion) check (DC 10) identifies the symbol as that of Wee Jas, goddess of magic and death. This sarcophagus once held the remains of a particularly devout and respected worshiper of Wee Jas, interred here nearly 800 years ago.

The Vecna cultists wasted little time looting this sarcophagus and using the remains inside to create one of the skeletons at area **T10**. Nothing of value remains here now.

Development: A character who returns the skeleton's body from area **T10** to this sarcophagus gains the blessing of Wee Jas. This manifests as an abstract, tattoo-like marking of a skull somewhere visible on the character's body. The blessing lasts for one month, during which time the character gains a +1 bonus on all saving throws against death effects and automatically succeeds at any rolls to stabilize if reduced to negative hit points. The character also gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks made against worshipers of Wee Jas. This magic effect functions at caster level 20.

T9. Dead Vermin (EL 4)

The narrow winding corridor opens up again to a broad chamber lit only by a faintly glowing moss that clings to the floor in patches. Hundreds of small holes, each about three inches in diameter, pierce the cavern walls.

Creature: Only those presenting the holy symbol of Vecna can get through this chamber unmolested, for the walls of this cavern are infested with the cult's most dangerous undead menaces—a swarm of corpse rats. This undead swarm was granted to the cult as a reward for capturing and rebuilding a shrine of Wee Jas in Vecna's name by the god of secrets himself. As with the other undead guardians of the caves, the swarm does not attack those who openly wear the symbol of Vecna. The swarm fights until slain and is turned as one 4-Hit Die creature.

Corpse Rat Swarm: CR 4; Tiny undead (swarm); HD 8d12; hp 52; Init +1; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +4; Grp —; Atk/Full Atk Swarm (2d6) plus disease; Space/Reach 10 ft./0 ft.; SA disease (filth fever), distraction; SQ DR 5/slashing, swarm traits, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 4, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a corpse rat swarm in its square must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

T10. Crimson Lake (EL 3)

The staircase ends at a small ledge overlooking a lake of gently rippling blood. Far across the cavern, broken columns protrude from the lake. The sound of splashing blood falling from above echos throughout this vast space.

This lake is fed from above by the pool and spigots mentioned in area **T4**. At its deepest, the pool reaches a depth of three feet.

Creatures: Hiding in the pool of blood are eight human skeletons placed by the cult as final guardians before the newly converted shrine to Vecna. If the trap was set off in area **T5**, Isalnarr (area **T11**) bolsters the undead from the darkness of area **T11** by channeling negative energy. The skeletons approach the PCs while still under the blood before rising to attack.

Medium and Large creatures that wade in the blood function as if walking through dense rubble (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 60).

Human Warrior Skeletons (8): hp 6; *Monster Manual* 226.

Treasure: One of the skeletons appears to be much more ancient than the others. A search of this skeleton uncovers a silver holy symbol of Wee Jas hanging on its neck on a fine chain. This symbol is worth 25 gp; the cultists of Vecna chose to leave the symbol on the undead skeleton as an insult to the rival goddess.

Development: A character that returns this ancient skeleton to its proper resting place in area **T8** becomes blessed by Wee Jas, as detailed in that area description.

T11. Hall Of Secrets (EL 3)

A two-foot-wide river of blood runs down the center of this broad hall, between a row of tall black columns on either side. Each column bears a glowing red symbol of an open hand with an eye in the palm, bathing everything in deep crimson. Faint whispers fill the air of the room with a latent malignancy.

A Knowledge (religion) check (DC 10) reveals the symbols on the columns to be unholy glyphs sacred to Vecna. The whispering in this hall is a permanent *ghost sound* (caster level 13) created by a visiting worshiper of Vecna some time ago. The small river of blood running down the center of the hall flows up to the doors leading into area **T12** and is only one foot deep.

Creature: This hall is also home to Isalnarr, door warden of the shrine in area **T12**. If he realizes the PCs are not cultists, he fights them to the death. As he attacks, he shouts a warning to Veltargo, who waits in area **T12**.

Isalnarr, Male Human Clr2: CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d8+4; hp 16; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+2, masterwork heavy mace); SA spells, rebuke/command undead; SQ —; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14 Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 13.

Skills: Concentration +7, Listen +5, Knowledge (religion) +3, Spellcraft +3.

Feats: Endurance, Diehard.

Languages: Common.

Spells Prepared (4/3+1; base DC 13 + spell level): 0—*create water, cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance*; 1st—*cause fear* (2), *cure light wounds, protection from good**.

*Domain spell. *Domains*: Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level); Magic (use magic items as 1st-level wizard).

Possessions: Masterwork heavy mace, *+1 breastplate*, heavy steel shield, *potion of cure light wounds*.

Trap: A non-evil character touching the door leading into area **T12** sets off a magical trap. The triggering of the trap is accompanied by a sudden swelling in the whispering within the chamber.

***Doom* Door**: CR 1; spell; touch trigger; no reset; spell effect (*doom*, 1st-level cleric, –2 on attacks, damage, saves and checks for one minute, DC 11 avoids); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

T12. Vecna Shrine (EL 4)

This vast chamber rises up to a great vaulted ceiling forty feet above the black marble floor. Two silver braziers flank a large pool of blood on the far side of the chamber, both emitting a thick red smoke. A black basalt statue stands in the center of the pool. Nearly twenty feet tall, the statue depicts a rotting corpse wearing fine robes, and is missing an eye and a hand. Each wound pours forth blood to fill the pool below. An ornate bookstand before the statue contains a single large tome, its pages open and on display.

Creatures: This shrine is tended by a cleric of Vecna named Veltargo, the man responsible for the theft of Theldrat's key. Veltargo has a surprise for the PCs. Hidden inside the pool is a skeletal owlbear under his control. On the first round of combat, as a free action, he orders the "blessed one" to rise from the pool and destroy the PCs.

Veltargo is a sly, evil man always thirsting for greater and greater secrets to the glory of Vecna. He is thin, balding and cares little for personal hygiene. His black robes are emblazoned with Vecna's holy symbol on the back.

The Blessed One, Owlbear Skeleton: hp 30; *Monster Manual* 226.

Veltargo, Male Human Clr3: CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d8+6; hp 23; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+3, masterwork morningstar); SA spells, rebuke/command undead; SQ —; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 18, Cha 12.

Skills: Concentration +8, Heal +10, Knowledge (religion) +7, Spellcraft +7.

Feats: Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Languaes: Common, Abyssal.

Spells Prepared (4/3+1/2+1; base DC 14 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, light*; 1st—*bane, command, divine favor,*

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"Mad God's Key" is designed for a group of four 1st-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 2nd–3rd level characters. All NPCs in the adventure should have their class levels advanced by an amount equal to the increase in average party level, with the exception of Marek and Flegon, the two thugs who the PCs catch at Theldrat's shop.

Replace the zombies in area **T7** with ghouls. Area **T10** should become infused with unholy energies that grant the skeletons found there a +2 profane bonus to Armor Class, a +2 profane bonus on attack rolls and weapon damage rolls, and fast healing 2. In area **T12**, replace the owlbear skeleton with an ogre zombie.

Remember that if you change the level of the encounters in this adventure, you'll need to adjust the treasure amounts as well. Consult the section on Treasure that begins on page 51 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more specific details.

*protection from good**; 2nd—*bull's strength, desecrate**, *spiritual weapon*.

*Domain spell. *Domains*: Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level); Magic (use magic items as 1st-level wizard).

Possessions: Masterwork morningstar, banded mail, heavy steel shield, 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, *wand of magic missile* (1st level caster, 50 charges), *cloak of resistance +1*, 2 scrolls of *contagion*, belt pouch containing 205 gp.

Treasure: The book on the stand is the one stolen from Greyhawk's Great Library. The cultists have used Theldrat's key to open the book, but about half its pages have been torn out and are missing. The remainder of the book is written in Draconic and deals entirely with undead—specifically the creation of unique and powerful undead creatures. Sitting next to the book is Theldrat's key. Made of plain copper, the key's once wondrous magic powers have been drained in the process of opening the book's lock; it will never open a lock again.

T13. Cult Headquarters

This chamber contains nearly a dozen dirty mats that look recently used. A long table sits at the far end, near another door.

A search of this room reveals signs that many people lived here recently, including half-eaten food scraps, dirty robes, and a large pile of chicken bones. It also looks like the room was hastily packed up and emptied. Only one clue remains here—sitting in the center of the table is a small scrap of parchment with a message in Common.

"Veltargo, remain here and guard the temple. We shall return as soon as we gather the necessary components required by the book. Soon, all of the unholy secrets will be within our grasp."

The door leading out of this room leads to a long, winding passageway that eventually ends at a secret door on the surface a half-mile from the tomb.

Concluding The Adventure

When he finds out Zagig's Key has lost its powers, Theldrat is obviously upset, but happy that it is no longer in the wrong hands. Although he is unable to reward the PCs properly, he makes sure to offer his services in the future should the PCs need him. If the PCs return the tome to Greyhawk's Great Library, the librarians are disappointed that the book has been terribly damaged, but the fact that the book is now open intrigues them greatly. As long as they don't think the PCs did the damage themselves, they pay each PC 250 gp as a reward for returning it.

If using this adventure outside the Living Greyhawk campaign, this plot offers a number of seeds for the future. Who are the other members of the cult? Where have they gone? What are they planning with the information from the tome? Will they seek revenge upon the PCs for meddling in their plan? By addressing these questions, this adventure

can be used as a springboard for a campaign in which the PCs confront the cult of Vecna and slowly try to recover the missing pages of the tome.

If played as part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign, this adventure plotline continues in the RPGA event "COR4-12: Key to the Grave," set to premier at this year's Gen Con Indianapolis.

Appendix: The Living Greyhawk Campaign

LIVING GREYHAWK is the world's largest D&D campaign, with more than 15,000 players from across the world. The campaign is run by the RPGA, and divides the United States, most of Europe, Australia, and Canada into a number of regions. Each region is assigned a nation from the WORLD OF GREYHAWK. For example, if you live in Michigan, your character hails from the Kingdom of Furyondy. Each region has its own unique adventures, with rich backgrounds and plotlines. In addition to this, there are a number of "core" adventures for you to play, set in areas of the WORLD OF GREYHAWK not controlled by any region, such as Greyhawk City, the Bright Desert, and the Pomarj. Want to play in the Bandit Kingdoms? Travel to Texas. Veluna up next? Make a visit to Ohio. How about an adventure set in Onnwal? Just head for Great Britain.

How Do I Make A Hero?

You already know how to make a character for the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign. For your abilities, use the 28-point buy method found on page 169 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*. All of the options presented in the *Player's Handbook* are open to you at character generation. Other books, such as the *Complete Warrior*, become available to you after first level. For starting gold, simply take the maximum amount for your class. All of the equipment in the *Player's Handbook* is available, from masterwork armor to thunderstones. Finally, log on to the RPGA website at www.rpga.com to find out what region you reside in and to get an RPGA number if you don't already have one. More advanced rules for character generation, as well as options available at higher levels can be found inside the complete *LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook* (LGCS), which can be downloaded at www.rpga.com.

Running "Mad God's Key" As A Living Greyhawk Adventure

This too, is pretty simple. First, go to www.rpga.com and take the Herald-level DM test. Make sure to have your *Player's Handbook*, *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, and *Monster Manual* handy. The test isn't too tricky, and you can take it as often as you like. Once you've passed, you can order the appropriate paperwork by logging onto the RPGA's secure server. Step-by-step instructions are available on the site. Once you've ordered the event, you'll be able to download simple Adventure Records (AR), to be given to each hero at the end of the event, as well as another simple primer to help walk you through the specifics. Running the event itself is just like running any other home game, using the information provided in the adventure text as written. When you're done, simply report the event to the RPGA through your account on their secure server.

What Else Is There For Me To Play?

Your region has plenty of new and challenging adventures available, many of which are suitable for low-level characters. In addition, core events are always ready and waiting to challenge your players with cunning foes and vile fiends. These adventures can be downloaded from the RPGA website at no charge. Also, most regions have their own web community, where they organize gamedays and major conventions. Check out these shows near you for more exciting opportunities for high adventure in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK.

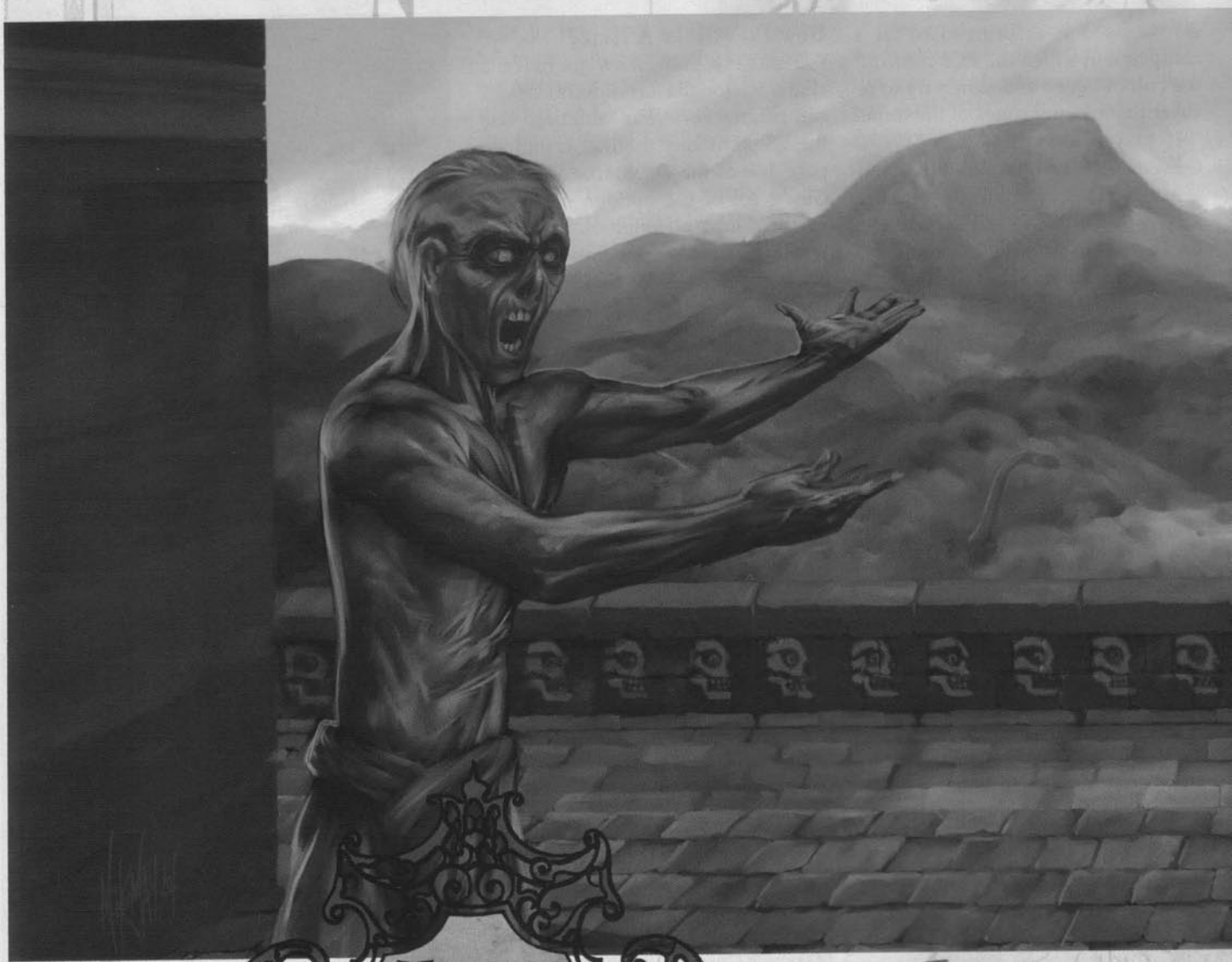
Jason Bulmahn is an architect by day and a senior campaign administrator for the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign by night. Sleep is rarely on the schedule. This is Jason's first adventure in the pages of DUNGEON.

THE PORTENT

by Peter Bergting

LLOYD! NO! DON'T OPEN THAT! GAHHH! TOO LATE!
BOOM!
NOT THE GAS!!!
RAAAH!!!
I TOLD YOU TO KEEP THE DRAGON AWAY FROM THE GAS!!! NOW HE'S BLOWN UP THE ENTIRE WORKSHOP!!!
RELAX OWEN! LOOK 'OW CUTE 'E IS! I THINK I'M GONNA NAME 'IM BILL! HE LOOKS LIKE A BILL DONTCHA THINK?
FRR!
MMM, YES... ADORABLE! ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU DO THIS!
SKWEEK
EEEEEP!

THE PORTENT ™ & © '04 BERGTING



Isle of Dread

Exploring the Isle of Dread

By Gary Holian
Illustrations by Mike May
Poster Map by Chris Trevas

The Isle of Dread is an adventure setting that takes the player characters to a primeval world across the waters, far from the lands of their birth. Armed only with pages from the long lost diary of a dead explorer, their wits, and the equipment they brought on their voyage, the adventurers confront the denizens of a dark and mysterious tropical island without succor and little respite. They are not alone in their quest to conquer the secrets of this eerie isle, for it was once home to a mighty civilization and has attracted the attention of many adversaries. The potential rewards are great, for the isle hides both untold riches and wondrous magic. Adventurers must merely survive long enough to claim

them, but on the Isle of Dread, survival is by no means guaranteed.

This article is a re-imagining of the classic setting described in the 1981 module *X1: Isle of Dread*, by David Cook and Tom Moldvay. It places the legendary Isle of Dread in the default D&D setting: the WORLD OF GREYHAWK, but it can easily be adapted to a remote tropical region in another world. Summon the heroes! The Isle of Dread awaits!

Background

Torn from the pages of a ship captain's log:

"When the gale finally ended we found ourselves blown south and countless days off course, floating adrift in the warm equatorial waters of the Densac Gulf without hope of speedy return to Rel Astra. Our destination remained the jungles of Amedio, but I knew the *White Countess* would never survive the crossing now, not without re-provisioning and modest repairs. In this condition, she might never make it home at all. I ordered young Atirr into the crow's nest with my best spyglass and made west by northwest, hoping that dry land would not be far.

"On the third day—by Procan—our prayers were answered. A chain of islands unmarked on any chart began to appear on the horizon to the west. Perhaps these were the pirate isles of which I had been warned. We made sail for the closest and within a small bay we encountered a modest village of thatched huts. The natives were friendly, if a bit wary. Their dark-hued skin and exotic features related them to the Olman of the Amedio Jungle. After some persuasion, they were willing to trade food and supplies for weapons and tools of steel. Alas, lumber to repair the *Countess* was not to be found. I inquired about the surrounding islands, but the village chieftain seemed determined to warn me off their exploration. He attempted to frighten my men with tales of 'unholy enemies' and 'curses.' Indeed, he made me swear to avoid sailing due west into the heart of the archipelago before his men would even let me set foot in the last launch back to the ship!

"I bade my host farewell, knowing in my heart that an oath to a savage could not bind an Aerdi gentleman,

and ordered my men to weigh anchor and set sail for the larger islands to the west. We encountered numerous villages populated by the same Olmanish folk. But many of these tribes were hostile and warlike. Some attacked my men on sight, and I dare say we uncovered plentiful evidence of cannibalism. The crew is primarily sailors, not warriors or adventurers, and I lost many of them to the rapacious savages without profiting our situation any. I began to lose heart as we progressed through the isles, for my calculations increasingly suggested that we were farther south than any Aerdi chart had ever recorded, perhaps as far as the legendary Pearl Sea.

"Finally, two weeks after entering the archipelago, we spied a vast isle that spanned the horizon, crowned by a central plateau shrouded in fog and surrounded by a lush jungle that ran to steep cliffs in almost all directions. Our approach (fortuitously, I would later discover) was from the southeast, where a lowland peninsula reached out to divide the nearby waters. We eschewed the smaller islands nearby and made straight for it. The peninsula was cut off from the main island by a neck of land and as we sailed nearer, I was shocked to discover the latter was warded off from the former by a massive well-built wall of stone!

"I personally led the shore party, so excited was I by this hint of civilization. We went well armed and prepared for anything. After we hiked the distance to the edifice, to my chagrin we discovered that the near side of the great wall sheltered yet another village of primitive Olman natives. I studied the wall, which was indeed man-made and quite impressive, undoubtedly the work of hundreds, if not thousands of men. These natives were friendly and (most unusually!) a woman led them. They told us their settlement was called 'Tanaroa.' However, the name they gave to the vast island that was their home intrigued me more—the Isle of Dread.

"As we spent time with the Tanaroans that day, we learned that the massive wall that separated their peninsula from the rest of the island was built by ancients whom they called 'the gods.' According to the villagers, these 'gods' supposedly built a city atop the island's central plateau. The pervasive fogs surrounding those highlands prevented my spyglass from confirming this claim; only a direct inspection would suffice. But as I learned more about their culture and traditions, I began to increasingly suspect that these 'gods' of which they spoke were their ancestors, a people who possessed a more advanced culture than anything in evidence now. Could this once have been an outpost of the vast Olman Empire of legend? I was tantalized.

"My excitement grew as I listened to the Tanaroans regale us with tales of treasure beyond imagining, including a great black 'pearl of the gods' that was the symbol of the dominion of this city. Clearly, these people were quite proud of their heritage. The waters surrounding the archipelago abound with prodigious oyster beds, so these folktales are not without foundation. I inquired about the rest of the inhabitants of the isle and at this the Tanaroans grew silent. A roar that I confess made my hairs curl on end soon pierced the silence. I had never heard anything like it.

My men and I ran to the wall, attempting to see what made the cry. At this, the Tanaroans attempted to stop us, their hysterical jabbering included talk of 'demons' and great beasts that could devour a man whole. They spoke of a curse upon the ancient ruins and the jungle, placed by the 'gods' before they departed. Only a large and well-armed party of warriors could be allowed beyond the Great Wall. While dubious, I could not doubt the ferocity of the creature that made that cry, and given the poor state of my crew could not in good conscience risk their lives to it.

"I ordered them back to the ship and bade farewell to the Tanaroans, granting their matriarch such gifts as I could spare to win her future good will. The next time I shall return from Rel Astra with an expedition worthy of the endeavor of exploring this land. Before departing, however, I was determined to sail around the isle and its rocky coastline, making as detailed markings of its features as I could. The work was painstaking, made more difficult by a suddenly rising fog that seemed to pour from the plateau into the surrounding jungle at dusk. Our task nearly complete, we sailed past a cove on the northern side of the island, where I confess I was shocked to spy the wreck of a sailing ship of northern design in the shoals. This was no Olman outrigger! From its broken hull emerged a prow carved in the likeness of a rampant lion and I noted that the dilapidated rigging was decades, perhaps centuries out of date. My curiosity got the best of me and I ordered the men to lower anchor and, despite their misgivings, I told the crew we were staying the night. In the morning we would attempt to salvage the wreck.

"I wish I had never ordered the stay, as the events of those next few hours haunt me still. I recall it was the piercing cry of young Atirr that awoke me that night. Creatures...I scarcely know what to call them, had attacked the ship. Before I could reach the deck, they had made away with the entire watch of eight men, more than a third of the remaining crew without nary a fight! As for an account of the events, I could only rely on the shaken boy who witnessed it best from the crow's nest: fiendish man-like beasts rose from the waters surrounding the *White Countess*. They had smooth heads, large eyes, and tentacled, sphinctered mouths. The men of the watch appeared entranced by the creatures and leapt into the sea to their deaths untouched. I was horrified. We, the survivors, sailed away immediately as if our lives depended on it.... this 'Isle of Dread' had earned its name in my eyes..."

So read excerpts from the surviving pages of the diary of Rory

Barbarosa, sailor and explorer, as penned nearly 30 years ago aboard his vessel, the *White Countess*. The tale of his journey into the Densac Gulf was considered apocryphal and was spread widely by sailors in the Azure Sea and the Solnor Coast to amuse and frighten themselves. That is, until pages from the actual diary were recently produced and sworn to by the famous sea captain Madsen Atirr, last surviving member of Barbarosa's crew.

This truth was already well known to the Seekers, a secretive society of explorers who funded Barbarosa's first expedition to the Amedio Jungle by way of the Densac Gulf. Upon Rory's unprofitable return north, the society denied him finances for a proposed second expedition. The Seekers considered both the proposal and its proponent too risky, despite Barbarosa's claims of great treasure and illuminating discovery. They catalogued and shelved his account of the expedition, considering it a poor candidate for future exploration.

Rory Barbarosa, in the meanwhile, sought funding elsewhere and ultimately turned to gambling in a desperate attempt to amass financing. Before he could gather a new crew and return to the Isle of Dread, he angered the very powerful Drax, Lord Mayor of the majestic port of Rel Astra, and met an untimely end.

The Densac Gulf

A vast stretch of ocean lies south of the Azure Sea and the capitals of the civilized world. To the west, the gulf is demarcated by the Amedio Jungle, while the small tropical continent known as Hepmonaland bounds it in the east. Eventually, the warm-watered expanse opens onto the Pearl Sea to the far south, near the equator. The Densac Gulf contains hundreds of islands, many grouped into vast archipelagos. The climate of the Densac Gulf is tropical and the region is noted for frequent and dangerously powerful storms in the summer months. But the most menacing feature of the gulf remains the various creatures which roam these waters, including morkoths, giant sea serpents, sea zombies, and kraken.

The dominant human population of the islands of the Densac Gulf are the Olman, a tribal, warlike race with characteristic reddish-brown skin and straight black hair. Though considered primitive by the standards of the modern kingdoms of the north, the Olman once controlled many realms of great complexity, wealth, and artistry around these waters. At its height more than a millennium ago, the Olman expanded into a loosely knit seafaring empire of city-states that were built on warfare and conquest. Decades of enervating civil war, religious strife, and in some cases supernatural tumult brought upheaval to their city-states, and most Olman folk reverted to the relatively primitive societies in evidence now.

Legend of the Isle

The distances and difficulty involved in taming their wild and striking environs did not deter the Olman princes who settled these isles more than 1,300 years ago. They came on great galleys laden with warriors, colonists, and slaves. The Olman settlers cleared vast stretches of jungle in order to plant crops. Upon the island's central plateau the Olman built a fortified city that dwarfed all other settlements in the region. Known as the city-state of Thanaclan (the "Land of the Pearl"), it became one of the wealthiest kingdoms of the far-flung Olman Empire, thanks primarily to the vast quantities of treasures recovered off the islands' coasts.

Eventually, their prosperity rivaled even the richest kings of the Amedio, though their isolation kept them out of the civil wars that such wealth often produced in the heart of the empire. To guard their realm from invasion, the Olman of Thanaclan warded off the only lowland approach to their kingdom with a Great Wall. This Great Wall, which took ten years to complete, impressed all that came to visit Thanaclan with its sheer magnitude and massive gates.

Left alone to prosper, the citizens of Thanaclan became confident and proud of their quick success. Politics and religion in Thanaclan were inextricably intertwined. The Olman established an orderly and hierarchical society in which each stratum worked toward the common good. Above all were the mystical clerical princes of the city, nearly a dozen in number.

The princes preached that only by the grace of their deities could the Olman achieve and sustain their success, and that this grace was won through sacrifice, including that of human beings. In their honor, the princes of Thanaclan built a great pantheon of white stone—a temple to their gods located on the highest hill in the center of the plateau. Within this edifice they placed their greatest and most unique treasures and made regular sacrifices to the gods. They decorated the walls of the temple with the wondrous opalescent wealth retrieved from the shores of the island and made it gleam like the inside of a shell. The temple became both the real and symbolic heart of the city-state's power.

Though the princes of Thanaclan prospered for generations, they could not know they had an unseen enemy, for these isles were once the possession of an ancient aquatic race known as the koprus. The koprus were notorious for their exceeding intelligence, as well as their boundless evil. Their enticing and beguiling natures enslaved countless races both below and above the sea and amassed them into a great empire. Millennia later, however, nearly all evidence of their passing has been concealed below the earth and in the surrounding waters of the isles, for the koprus preferred dark steaming places in which to lair.

Koprus worship strange and alien powers, including the fiend known elsewhere as Demogorgon. The koprus were constantly at war with the other aquatic races of the Densac Gulf, but with none more so than their ancient enemies, the ixitxachitl. It amused the Twin-Headed Beast of the Abyss

to pit the two races against each other to see which would triumph, assuring both separately of his favor. Ultimately, after centuries of conflict, the legends record that the koprus lost the war and their civilization went into precipitous decline, forcing them to retreat into the deepest recesses of the earth and sea.

When humans, in the form of the intrepid Olman émigrés, began arriving to settle the surface of the island, the koprus took notice. It was following the consecration of the Great Temple of Thanaclan that the koprus finally unfolded their vile plot. For four decades, kopru sorcerers had labored in their submerged and subterranean lairs, cultivating and nurturing the largest black pearl the world had ever seen. Birthed from the spawn of a fiendish giant oyster and poisoned with malign and irresistibly charming magic, the pearl became imbued with Demogorgon's power and its raw beauty was irresistible. Finally ready, the kopru placed it where the Olman of Thanaclan would find it and become enraptured with it. The trap had been set.

The ebony prize was discovered by Olman pearl-fishers soon after. They carried it into Thanaclan as a trophy sent from the gods. But once ensconced in the temple in the highest place of honor, it corrupted everything it touched. The gods of the Olman promptly turned their gaze from these islands.

The curse's effects surfaced slowly at first, but soon the calamities cascaded. Storms lashed the archipelago, crops failed, and the jungle encroached on productive land. Strange fogs appeared in the jungle, becoming the harbinger of increasing ill fortune. Wild beasts ran rampant, including some unknown to Olman historians. The ground beneath the plateau began to tremble with increasing frequency and Thanaclan's citizens began to flee the city to the safety of nearby isles.

The clerical princes were distraught and bewildered at their predicament. In a desperate effort to rid themselves of the vile pearl, the high priests attempted to cast it beyond the bounds of this world. But this final enchantment instead sealed their doom. The black pearl absorbed their magic and oozed a soupy fog that poured forth from the plateau. The princes of Thanaclan summoned the last of their power in an attempt to destroy the pearl. The ensuing explosion rocked the plateau. The ground beneath the city erupted in massive geysers, swallowing the streets of Thanaclan and sinking the city into a boiling lake. A doorway between worlds had been punctured, linking the island to Demogorgon's Abyssal domain. Monsters from this nightmarish realm spilled out from the fogs that played across the face of the island, engulfing the survivors. In a matter of months, the Kingdom of Thanaclan disappeared from the face of Oerth, replaced by a prehistoric land that came to be known as the Isle of Dread.

Getting to the Isle

The Isle of Dread is located far from the traditional adventuring grounds of most campaigns; it is a distant, exotic realm of limitless danger and tantalizing opportunity. Listed below are several methods you can use to entice and tempt your PCs to travel to the Isle. All of these scenarios require an ocean voyage of many days south, through the Densac Gulf, to the Isle

of Dread. Once the ship arrives in the Thanaclan Archipelago, there can be no doubting which island is the Isle of Dread, for it dwarfs its lessers, being some 270 miles long north to south and some 100 miles wide.

Discovering the Scrolls: In the oldest trick in the book, the party stumbles upon copies of Rory Barbarosa's diary among a scholar's purloined papers, discovered perhaps in a treasure hoard. They read the accounts of his first exploration to the Isle of Dread and should be able to confirm that the general facts about his expedition appear to be true. Using the notebook and his charts, the PCs can outfit a ship and make the journey to the island for themselves.

Morningstar **Expedition**: The infamous sea captain Madsen "the Mad" Atirr, last surviving member of Rory Barbarosa's original expedition, has finally decided to undertake a return voyage to the Isle of Dread. Though he was but a boy on the first voyage, Atirr's memory of the experience remains fresh, and his skills at navigating the waters of the world unparalleled. But Atirr requires more than an experienced crew. He needs adventurers: men and women who can help him survive the dangers of the Isle once his ship, the famed *Morningstar*, reaches the Thanaclan Archipelago. He's willing to offer equal share of whatever is salvaged to those brave enough to join him.

In Service to the Duke: Recent confirmation of the truthfulness of Barbarosa's tale reaches the Duke of Gradsul, one of the scions of the Kingdom of Keoland, and prompts him to sponsor an expedition to the Thanaclan Archipelago. He is convinced that Barbarosa may have spotted evidence of the shipwreck of his legendary ancestor, the last Explorer-King Malv III, in the waters off the great island. At the port city of Gradsul, the Duke outfits one of the newest ships of his rebuilt fleet, the *Lionhearted*, and hires a crew of adventurers to make the journey to the Isle along with a squad of royal marines in order to salvage the wreck and learn the fate of his royal kin.

Iron League Gambit: The Free City of Irongate and its allies have been fighting a long, subversive war with the Scarlet Brotherhood and its pirate lackeys. A spy for the Iron League discovers the Brotherhood is unusually interested in the legend of the "Isle of Dread," and that they have just launched a high-profile expedition to the place to accumulate "knowledge" that could change the tide of the war. The Iron League and its leaders cannot allow this to happen and have outfitted a swift ship in Irongate to shadow the Scarlet Brotherhood expedition and assure its ruin. Adventurers of great skill and cunning are sought to join the crew.

Gazetteer of the Isle

The lowland peninsula that juts from the southeastern corner of the island is easily the most hospitable destination. In ancient times, this peninsula was the main point of departure from the Kingdom of Thanaclan to the other islands of the archipelago. While it contains no docks or ports to accommodate modern seafaring vessels, the coasts of the peninsula do not share the steep cliffs that dominate the shores of the rest of the island. Launches or outrigger canoes can easily achieve the peninsula's long sandy beaches.

Most of the human population of the archipelago dwells in this region of the isle, where they are sheltered from most of the dangers by the Great Wall. The Olman natives, who are descendents of the original Olman settlers of these isles, call the peninsula "Home." While the peninsula is still dominated by jungle, it has been cleared in many areas to accommodate settlements and to allow for the planting of certain staples such as plantains and breadfruit. A rudimentary system of well-cleared dirt trails links the settlements.

The Olman of the peninsula and the nearby islands are organized into seven settlements, totaling more than 2000 inhabitants. They have no collective name for their civilization (they are merely the "people"). In the tongue of the natives, their villages are known as Kirikura, Dawa, Usi, Mora,

Peninsula Encounters

Roll	Monster	Average EL	Source
01	1 Dire tiger	8	*Monster Manual* 65
02–04	1d4 Dire boars	6	*Monster Manual* 63
05	1 Ahuizotl	6	*Fiend Folio* 14
06	1 Weretiger	5	*Monster Manual* 174
07–10	1 Mummy	5	*Monster Manual* 190
11–14	1 Snake, giant constrictor	5	*Monster Manual* 280
15–18	1 Spider, Huge monstrous	5	*Monster Manual* 289
19–21	1d4 Wights	5	*Monster Manual* 255
22–24	1 Wraith	5	*Monster Manual* 258
25–28	1d4 Dire apes	5	*Monster Manual* 62
29–32	1d4 Terror birds	5	*Fiend Folio* 175
33–36	2d4 Ghouls	4	*Monster Manual* 119
37–50	2d4 Olman human Ftr1	4	*Dungeon Master's Guide* 117
51–52	1 Wereboar	4	*Monster Manual* 172
53–56	1d4 Spiders, Large monstrous	4	*Monster Manual* 289
57–61	2d6 Human zombies	4	*Monster Manual* 266
62–63	1 Dryad	3	*Monster Manual* 90
64–72	3d4 Dire rats	3	*Monster Manual* 64
73–77	3d4 Human skeletons	3	*Monster Manual* 226
78–83	1 Snake, Huge viper	3	*Monster Manual* 280
84–87	1 Wasp swarm	2	*Fiend Folio* 172
88–93	1 Monitor lizard	2	*Monster Manual* 275
94–100	1 Snake, Large viper	2	*Monster Manual* 280

Panitube, Burowao, and the largest as Tanaroa. The latter four settlements are on the peninsula proper, while Kirikura, Dawa, and Usi are on separate islands nearby. For reasons not well understood (though likely owing to religious practices) the population of each village has evolved over the centuries into distinct clans. The current clans are the Ape, Tiger, Boar, and Sea Turtle Clans. Each maintains its own collection of huts and a graveyard within each village and marks them with their specific animal totem. The clans believe that these animals are their blood brothers and are representative of their inner selves. This identification has led to some specialization between clans, with the Boar Clan being primarily builders and craftsmen, the Tiger Clan hunters and gatherers, the Ape Clan farmers and storytellers, and the Sea Turtle Clan fishermen and sailors.

Unusually for Olman culture, the seven villages are governed by matriarchs that are loosely allied into a council of chiefs. The lineage of each clan is traced through the mother's side of the family and only her name is carried into the next generation. The more savage Olman tribes (some of them cannibals) inhabit the more far-flung isles of the Thanaclan Archipelago, and have male chiefs and consider the inhabitants of the seven villages aberrant.

Though the chiefs here are female, clan leaders are invariably male and form a council of war in times of trouble. One of his numbers is elected to advise the chief in each village and act as overall war leader. The seven villages engage in minor squabbles between each other from time to time, but quickly unite in their common defense if threatened from the outside. Unlike most of their neighbors, these Olman natives are peaceful unless first attacked.

The only other village official of importance is the local Zombie Master (or Mistress). An advisor to the chief, the Zombie Master is the primary link between the village and its ancestors, and controls the Cult of the Walking Dead. Ancestors are very important to the Olman, and the lines between the living and the dead are often blurred. The secretive cult led by the Zombie Master meets in darkness and its members witness rituals involving speaking with the dead or the creation of "walking ancestors," zombies to be used as spare laborers or warriors. The Zombie Master is usually a cleric or sorcerer of some experience, trained in the arts of speaking to the dead and animating corpses. He and his creations are shunned and feared by ordinary folk, even if they sometimes prove invaluable to the defense and prosperity of the seven villages.

The Olman do not share such spiritual things with outsiders. However, the natives are avid traders and happily sell their goods and services to strangers. The inhabitants of the seven villages are primarily fishermen, and the sea dominates their economy. Terrestrial hunting prospects are poor on the peninsula and rare beyond the Great Wall (and often only of a ceremonial nature). Food is plentiful. The seven villages abhor cannibalism, and practitioners of this vile tradition are exiled into the jungle. The Olman collect pearls, but do not risk the dangers of the most highly prized fisheries. They know that dark and hungry creatures lurk

Island Encounters

Roll	Monster	Average EL	Source
01–05	2d6 Diplodoci	18	*Dragon* #318 64
06–07	2d4 Seismosaurs	17	*Monster Manual II* 72
08	1d4 Giganotosaurs	15	*Dragon* #318 65
09–13	2d4 Triceratops	14	*Monster Manual* 61
14	1 Adult green dragon	13	*Monster Manual* 74
15–16	1 Spinosaurus	13	*Monster Manual II* 72
17–20	1d6 Stegosaurs	13	*Dragon* #318 68
21–23	1d6 Greenvises	13	*Monster Manual II* 120
24–25	1 Red sundew	13	*Monster Manual II* 179
26–27	1d6 Vrocks	12	*Monster Manual* 48
28–31	1d12 Ankylosaurs	12	*Monster Manual II* 70
32–34	1d8 Quetzalcoatluses	12	*Monster Manual II* 72
35–39	2d6 Pachycephalosaurs	12	*Dragon* #318 67
40–44	2d4 Parasaurolophi	12	*Dragon* #318 67
45–47	1d6 Tyrannosaurs	11	*Monster Manual* 61
48–51	3d4 Pirates (human Rog5)	11	*Dungeon Master's Guide* 123
52	1 Retriever	11	*Monster Manual* 47
53	1 Hezrou	11	*Monster Manual* 44
54–57	1d8 Wyverns	10	*Monster Manual* 259
58–62	2d6 Gargoyles	10	*Monster Manual* 113
63	1 Bebelith	10	*Monster Manual* 42
64–66	1d6 Allosaurs	10	*Monster Manual II* 70
67–70	2d4 Aranea	9	*Monster Manual* 15
71	1 Young adult black dragon	9	*Monster Manual* 70
72–75	2d6 Deinonychus	9	*Monster Manual* 60
76–77	1d6 Megaraptors	9	*Monster Manual* 60
78	1d2 Rocs	9	*Monster Manual* 215
79–80	1d6 Shambling mounds	9	*Monster Manual* 222
81	Hydra, nine-headed	8	*Monster Manual* 15
82	1d4 Lizardfolk Drd5	8	*Dungeon Master's Guide* 115
83–85	2d6 Pteranodons	8	*Dragon* #318 68
86–88	2d4 Dimetrodons	7	*Dragon* #318 64
89–92	1d6 Bullywug Bbn4	7	See page 58
93–94	1 Tendriculos	6	*Monster Manual* 241
95–100	2d6 Lizardfolk	6	*Monster Manual* 15

below the waves. The small boats of the Olman are not very sea-worthy and are limited primarily to transport between nearby islands, but the natives will hire out for transportation given sufficient remuneration.

As the PCs explore the peninsula, check for encounters when the PCs leave the shelter of one of the villages. There's a 10% chance of an encounter per hour. If the creature encountered is from a source you don't have, simply re-roll the encounter until you get a result you can use.

The Great Wall

Built over a millennium ago, the Great Wall is a massive structure erected from carefully fitted stone blocks. Its scale and structure are astonishing and clearly beyond the means of even the combined efforts of the seven Olman villages. It rises over fifty feet high and stretches nearly two miles, completely cutting off the peninsula from the island proper. Massive stone towers, twenty-eight in number, adorn the wall with regularity. Each tower is one hundred feet on a side and seventy feet high. Between the towers are gates constructed of 40-foot-wide wooden doors, 5 feet thick, blackened with age and oil, and strengthened with iron banding. Prodigious wooden beams have been lowered on the southern side to augment their strength. While the near side of the wall appears well cared for, the north side of the Great Wall is pockmarked, scratched, and burned as though it has been assailed time and again.

The most important concern of the Olman natives, outside of religion, is their cooperation in manning the Great Wall. The Great Wall and its towers have been garrisoned with warriors from the seven villages for so long that the effort has become ritual. Only the presence of this partition "erected by the gods" has prevented the horrors from the jungle beyond the wall from ending their civilization. The fogs that come and go in the jungle and herald the arrival of new menaces to the isle do not cross the Great Wall. As long as the natives can remember, the clan has taken charge of one of the towers, sending seven warriors to man it day and night. But it is the village of Tanaroa that has the primary responsibility for the Great Wall, since it lives in the very shadow of the edifice and controls the central gates, the only ones that are opened.

Village of Tanaroa

A large clearing separates the Great Wall from the jungle to its south. This land encloses the village of Tanaroa, the most important Olman settlement in the region. Between the wall and the settlement large tar pits serve as a second line of defense should something pierce the wall. A trail between the pits leads from the wall through Tanaroa to the southern villages of Mora, Panitube, and Burowao.

Tanaroa and its neighbors share the same general layout. Four groups of huts set at four equidistant points delineate the compounds of the four clans. Each group of huts is laid out in a circle, enclosing a central courtyard that contains a wooden totem and graveyard. Some of the villages have variations on this layout; the village of Mora, for example, relocates all the graveyards to a fifth area separate from the rest of the village. The huts are large, typically fifty feet long and twenty feet wide, with walls made of wood and a roof thatched with palm leaves. The Olman have raised the huts ten feet off the ground onto wooden stilts to protect them from flooding and jungle predators.

At the center of each village, a small, flat-topped mound serves as a meeting place for the entire village. A 30-foot tall pyramid-like structure made of earth and faced with stone stands in the center of the mound. Commerce and religious ceremonies are also conducted there.

The chieftain of Tanaroa is a wily, rotund old woman known as J'kal. She is well respected in the seven villages for her preternatural insight and shrewd leadership. She welcomes strangers to Tanaroa warmly and answers their questions truthfully. If treated fairly, the villagers help explorers who wish to venture into the jungle beyond the Great Wall, though not before warning them strongly and regaling them with tales of the great horrors that stalk the jungle and the plateau beyond. The Tanaroans, including their war leader, Kuro, offer themselves as guides (though never past the tar pits in the jungle beyond the Great Wall) and instruct the party in the isle's dangers. They never hire out as mercenaries and refuse to venture forth at all if the fogs stir in the jungle beyond the wall.

Weather

The weather on the Isle of Dread is, at best, uncomfortably warm and humid. Temperatures during the year don't fluctuate much from season to season, varying from about 64° F on the coast and atop the plateau to highs of 91° F in the interior. The Isle of Dread experiences two seasons: the wet season (roughly analogous to winter and spring) and the dry season (summer and fall). Even during the dry season, however, rainfall is common; rarely does a day pass without at least an hour or two of afternoon rain. The middle of the wet season usually sees the island buffeted by numerous typhoons, which bring with them up to hurricane-force winds and torrential downpours. The natives of the isle know to seek shelter during these storms, as those caught in them are often never seen again. Yet the most feared of the isle's weather patterns are the strange, thick fog banks that periodically well up from the interior, for it is during these times that strange new monsters typically appear on the isle.

The Jungle

The bulk of the Isle of Dread, from the Great Wall to the foothills of the central plateau, is covered in lush tropical jungles. Centuries of wild and unchecked growth have wiped away most evidence of the once great Kingdom of Thanaclan. The steaming rainforest is filled with exotic

flora, some of which have poisonous or wondrous healing properties.

Few examples of the original fauna of the island, such as the wild boars, rock baboons, or flightless birds, have survived. The isle is now overrun with terrible, legendary creatures. Chief and largest among these are the dinosaurs, or "Thunder Lizards," as the Olman natives call them. Only the Great Wall has kept these terrible monsters from trampling across the peninsula and wiping out the four villages located there; even then, the villages sometimes must contend with their swimming or flying cousins.

Local legends hold that untold centuries ago, shortly after the fall of the "city of the gods" on the plateau, strange fogs began to appear periodically on the island. Their arrival is said to herald the opening of doorways to other worlds. When the fogs rise, the Olman retreat to their villages and hope to avoid the notice of these terrors. The Isle of Dread has become their garden and all who enter become their prey.

As the PCs explore the island itself, check once per hour, with a 25% chance of an encounter occurring. If the creature encountered is from a source you don't have, simply re-roll the encounter until you get a result you can use.

The Tar Pits

The only location beyond the Great Wall frequented by the Olman tribes (and then only in heavily armed raiding parties of at least thirty warriors) are the tar pits a day's march northeast of the gates. Here, the Tanaroans renew their supplies of tar used in waterproofing boats and the roofs of huts. The tar is traded between the other six villages and is highly prized. On occasion, the warriors discover a jungle beast has become trapped in the gummy morass and they slaughter it and bring it back to the village for butchering.

Stones of the Dead

The villagers in Tanaroa speak of a set of "lost tombs of the gods" hidden deep in the jungle. Marked by megaliths that are scattered in various places on the isle, these locations are the only surviving evidence of the prior civilization. One location in particular includes an entire cluster of two dozen such standing stones. These stones are said to mark the lost tombs of the Olman princes of Thanaclan.

Each stone is almost ten feet in diameter, weighs as much as eighty tons, and acts as a capstone for a sunken, stone-lined tomb. The princes of Thanaclan who died in office were buried in these tombs, along with a great host of treasures and artifacts that represented their rule. The huge megaliths appear artistically carved. A characteristic motif of this art includes human faces combined with animal features to represent the inner man.

Most of the tombs have remained relatively unplundered, given the massive effort required to move the megaliths and the danger of the terrors of the jungle. The Olman of the seven villages would never assist in the disturbance of the resting place of the "gods," whom they believe are more powerful in death than they ever were in life.

The Plateau

Thrust up from the central highlands of the isle is a large plateau that once contained the glorious Olman city of Thanaclan. Mountainous hills on one side and a great river canyon on the other side surround this central volcanic mount. Its ghostly, often fog-enshrouded heights stand separated from the rest of the island by 3,000-foot cliffs.

A vast craterous lake dominates the center of the plateau. Grasslands and a small forest surround the lake, which exhibits cooler climes than the jungle that rings the plateau down on the surface of the isle. There is little evidence of the city that once stood here over 1,000 years ago. Some stone paving from the roads that led to and from the city remains, but little else does. A narrow causeway that once climbed from the jungle below to the city proper is in exceedingly poor condition, necessitating a difficult and dangerous climb over the final stretch of the journey, barring aerial or magical transport.

Very few creatures inhabit the plateau, and those that do are of an avian variety. The Olman speak of "living trees" in the forest that guard against interlopers and "sky lizards" that pluck men from their feet and carry them away to their deaths.

Check for encounters on the plateau once per hour, with a 15% chance of an encounter occurring. If the creature encountered is from a source you don't have, simply re-roll the encounter until you get a result you can use.

Village of Mantru

The only settlement on the plateau is a tiny village composed of a mere half-dozen huts and lean-tos on the shore of the central steaming lake. Its western edge is enclosed by a crude stockade that extends on both sides into the waters of the lake. The huts are raised two feet off the ground to avoid flooding.

Fifty Olman villagers, fishers and farmers, inhabit Mantru. They are divided into five families and are led by two men, an elderly warrior known as Fano and the tribal cleric, a pious and frail man known as Umlat. Fano is known as the "talking chief" because the center of the village contains a strange stone statue to which the villagers refer as the true "chief." Fano interprets the wishes of this stone "chief" who makes all the major decisions for the tribe.

The people of Mantru are friendly, and if approached peacefully, they are willing to parlay with visitors and offer them food and lodging. How they have survived in the midst of all these dangers beyond the Great Wall is not immediately clear, but they do not appear to be

very different from the Olman of the seven villages. One thing that is clear, however, is their unabiding and superstitious fear of the island in the middle of the lake. It is taboo and they do not speak of it or assist anyone who seeks to visit it.

The people of Mantru are under the subconscious enthrall of the koprus. Charmed over generations into docile "cattle," the people of Mantru have been conditioned not to raise a hand against their overlords, though they do not consciously recognize them as such. The strongest and most fit of the Olman of Mantru are caused to periodically revolt against the tribal chiefs, and serve the koprus at the ruins of the Great Temple at the center of the island in the lake. This coincidentally keeps the people of Mantru weak and devoid of their best warriors. The villagers view these deserters as traitors; all part of the kopru plan.

The Temple

The center of the crater lake contains a small patch of dry land only a few hundred feet in diameter, commonly known as Taboo Island. This steaming hill protrudes above the waters of the lake and was once the foundation of the Great Temple of the Olman of Thanaclan. It is now the only part of the ruins of the city not submerged beneath the torrid waters. Taboo island is dotted with small artifacts, broken statues, and crumbling terraces. The entire area is damp, stale, and foul smelling. The island can be reached by canoe with relative ease, as the waters of the lake are relatively still and not particularly deep, though if a threat is perceived, the koprus attack any approaching vessels with sea snakes and giant crocodiles.

The Great Temple was once a multi-level structure made of stone, containing many great and shining halls. The correct entrance is an opening where the walls have been decorated with bas-reliefs of two Olman warriors holding lighted braziers. Many of the rooms of the building, particularly the lower levels, are either partially or completely submerged beneath water. The Olman servitors of the koprus mostly inhabit the dry chambers of the surface. These rooms include a chapel to the vile and vainglorious koprus (including statuary of the same) run by enthralled human priests.

Plateau Encounters

Roll	Monster	Average EL	Source
01–15	2d4 Dire elephants	15	*Monster Manual II* 75
16–17	1 Adult green dragon	13	*Monster Manual* 74
18–25	2d4 Treants	13	*Monster Manual* 245
26–28	1d6 Vrocks	12	*Monster Manual* 48
29–35	1d6 Dire rhinoceroses	12	*Fiend Folio* 61
36–37	1 Hezrou	11	*Monster Manual* 44
38–50	2d6 Dire boars	10	*Monster Manual* 63
51–55	1d4 Dire tigers	10	*Monster Manual* 65
56–60	1d2 Rocs	9	*Monster Manual* 215
61–70	1d4 Dire bears	9	*Monster Manual* 63
71–80	2d6 Dire wolves	9	*Monster Manual* 65
81–85	2d6 Pteranodons	8	DRAGON #318 68
86–100	2d4 Olman human Ftr1	4	DUNGEON MASTER'S *Guide* 117

The koprus have made the Great Temple their chief outpost and the heart of their surface dominion of the Isle of Dread. From here, atop the ruins of the City of Thanaclan they destroyed centuries ago, their High Priestesses can partially control the isle's connection to various nether worlds, calling forth the fogs that draw the strange beasts to this isle. Here they also make sacrifices to the great and beguiling beast Demogorgon in the hopes of winning high places in the ranks of his fiendish cohorts. They accomplish these feats through manipulation of the giant black pearl known as the *Spawn of the Great One*. Its existence maintains the link between the world of the Isle of Dread and the otherworldly realms it touches. The koprus guard this object in a protected chamber in the heart of the ruined complex with all manner of monstrous beasts, and only its destruction can break their control over the isle.

The koprus do not welcome visitors on the temple island, and act quickly if the alarm is raised. They direct the skilled Olman warriors on the island to attack ruthlessly, fighting to the death, while they prepare their own vicious assault. If set upon by an obviously superior force, the koprus fight to the death themselves once their leader manages to flee to the ocean with the *Spawn of the Great One* via the underwater tunnels below.

Beneath the Isle

By ending their dominion over the ruins of the Great Temple of Thanaclan, the adventurers will not end the menace of the kopru race in the archipelago, though they will have dealt them a sharp blow.

The withered kopru kingdom rests primarily beneath the Isle of Dread, and can only be reached through certain dead geyser spouts and dormant lava tubes in and around the island. The kopru kingdom is a vast warren of semi-flooded passages and caverns, some of which are guarded by fiendish monsters. A campaign against the koprus would be long and dangerous, but if successful, is the only way to truly free the Isle of Dread from its terrible curse.

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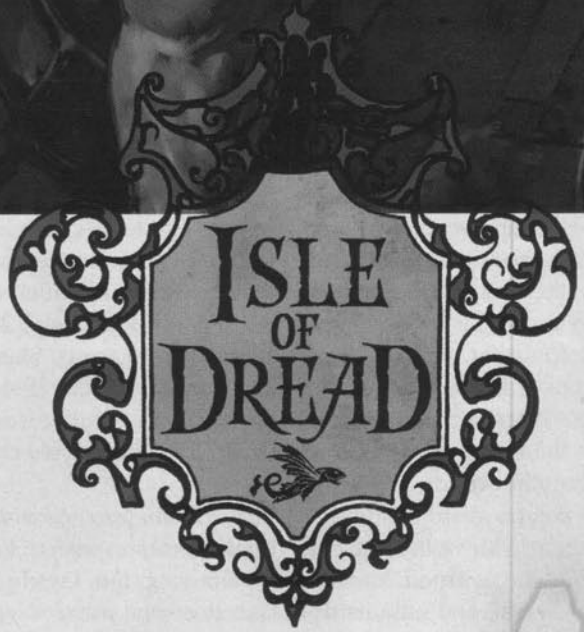
The Isle of Dread will return!



Torrents of Dread

By Greg A. Vaughan
Illustrations by Mike May
Cartography by Robert Lazzaretti

Any Setting • Mid-level (6–12) • Jungle & Dungeon Crawl

The Pearl Sea is dotted with dozens of islands, some relatively small and others quite large, all of them mysterious and dangerous. Monstrous reptiles, black-hearted pirates, and ancient cultures can be found on these remote islands, yet something far more sinister lurks in the lightless depths of the sea that surrounds them.

"Torrents of Dread" is a D&D adventure for four 6th-level characters. The DM can modify this adventure for characters of different levels by adjusting the encounters as described in the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar. The events of "Torrents of Dread" take place on the menacing Isle of Dread, a tropical island of primeval creatures and sinister monsters detailed in "Exploring

the Isle of Dread" (p. 40). The adventure can easily be set on any remote tropical coastal region inhabited by primitive humans and far enough off the explored naval lanes to be a complete mystery to the kingdoms of the civilized north.

Adventure Background

A cabal of koprus recently discovered a swath of ancient ruins on the sea floor near the Isle of Dread, exposed by an underwater earthquake. In these ruins, they found the means to summon a powerful servant of their ancient patron, the demon prince Demogorgon, Lord of All that Swims in Darkness. The necessary ritual involved great sacrifices of sentient beings and would call forth a furious storm that would beckon the creature's return. With the creature's potent support, the koprus would rise to new prominence. To obtain the necessary living sacrifices, they returned through ancient lava tubes to Mora, a small human village on the Isle of Dread.

First they *dominated* a local Zombie Master, the religious leader of Mora, and used him to procure sacrifices from among the villagers. They then began their ritual in the catacombs beneath the village and called forth the great storm. For over a week the storm raged above the island, growing larger and more powerful. It brought great woe to the villagers, and many more have disappeared as the ritual demands more and more sacrifices. The unearthly storm has also attracted all manner of creatures whose kind once served the koprus with its powerful call, and these have converged on the village of Mora to serve their aquatic masters. Into this raging torrent of dread comes the party aboard a small ship awash in the storm.

Adventure Synopsis

The party's has been caught in the unnatural storm and must seek shelter in a lagoon at the southern end of a huge island. While the sailors struggle to keep the ship afloat, the captain sends the party ashore to obtain help from the villagers to repair the ship. Once ashore the party learns that something is wrong in the village, and that this is more than an

ordinary storm. People are disappearing and mudslides have cut the survivors off from neighboring villages. The local Zombie Master (actually a revered citizen, as ominous as his name may sound) has disappeared, and the matriarch's son lies dead after murdering his own mother. The villagers plead with the party to find the Zombie Master so he can use his power to end the accursed storm that afflicts their island home.

Either by fighting their way through undead at the burial grounds or battling frog-like bullywugs at Mora's central pyramid, the party locates the flooding catacombs beneath the village, where they face more undead and minions of the koprus. They also uncover evidence that the Zombie Master is not so benevolent as the villagers believe. Finally they corner the Zombie Master, who has been transformed into a cursed undead as a result of his betrayal of his people at the hands of the koprus. While battling the maddened Zombie Master, they find the entrance to limestone tunnels still deeper under the island, and within these depths they can finally confront the koprus as they perform their horrid ritual. Only by ending this ritual can the party stop the unnatural storm and prevent the summoning of an indescribable interdimensional horror.

Chapter One: Village Of Dread

The adventure assumes that the party is aboard the caravel *Indira* for whatever reason fits the DM's campaign (several suggestions for getting your PCs to travel the Isle of Dread appear on page 44). Regardless of the reason, the *Indira* recently hit rough water and is now on the verge of sinking.

The strange storm began as only an ominous wall of gray clouds on the horizon that Captain Burkhalter felt the *Indira* could easily outrun. Unfortunately, the storm grew with an unheard of intensity. The caravel was soon swept up in its furious embrace and has remained there for the past two days. Even the seasoned veterans of the crew hold sailor's charms in white-knuckled fists and mutter superstitiously about the devil-storm as they valiantly struggle to save the ship.

It now appears that their efforts are for naught, as the vessel ships water faster than the bilges can be bailed. As the sailors continue their futile struggles and the captain grimly shouts orders into the dark, storm-lashed night, all seems lost.

A cry of "Lights!" cuts through the driving wind and rain. Through the darkness off the port rail, several points of flickering firelight some distance away beckon. The captain gives the order, and the *Indira* heels over toward them. Soon, the ship enters the calmer waters of a reef-sheltered lagoon. Across the lagoon, through the rain, the source of the lights is revealed to be a small shoreline village.

The *Indira* received quite a buffeting in the powerful monsoon, and rides perilously low in the water as she leaks profusely. Captain Burkhalter (human male Exp3/Ftr1) quickly assesses the situation and realizes he can barely keep the ship afloat. Since it will take the entire crew's efforts to keep her seaworthy, the captain needs someone else to row ashore and try to find help and equipment to make repairs to the ship before she is too far gone. To this end he approaches the party.

If the party has skills that were helpful in handling the ship, Captain Burkhalter approaches them respectfully. If they were huddled uselessly beneath a tarp the whole time trying to keep from being sick, he addresses the landlubbers with scorn.

"We've found a mite of respite behind this reef. We're still rain-lashed, but we've shelter from the worst of the waves. The ship'll stay afloat, but just barely. We'll be needing supplies—caulking, tar, lumber—if she's to stay that way. Our hands are full just keeping her topside o' these swells. I need someone to take the dory and head across the lagoon to that village and procure those supplies. Those someones be you."

Though the PCs may balk at such a task for lack of nautical skills, Captain Burkhalter assures them that he can spare none of his own crew, who are all busy keeping the *Indira* from foundering. If they demand reward, he grudgingly agrees to reimburse them half the fee of their passage on his ship (or whatever amount the DM feels is suitable for his campaign). He then provides the party with a small chest holding 200 gp and a list of the various supplies and equipment that he needs. He also supplies them with three *potions of tongues* since the locals are unlikely to speak Common, and warns the PCs that since each potion lasts for 50 minutes, they'll need to time their discussions with the locals well. He expects any unused potions to be returned, and makes sure to say as much before the PCs leave.

The trip across the lagoon is almost a quarter mile through harrowing monsoon-tossed waters. Navigating safely to shore requires a successful Profession (sailor) check (DC 15). Failure indicates that the tide does most of the work; the PCs still make it to shore, but each one suffers 2d6 nonlethal damage in the process (Reflex DC 15 halves).

The Village of Mora

After a treacherous and bruising journey, the PCs arrive on the beach near the hamlet of Mora, at area **1**. The driving rain and wind isn't as bad over land as it is at sea, but it's still somewhat dangerous. The rain reduces visibility ranges by half, resulting in a –4 penalty on Listen, Search, and Spot checks. The winds are strong, causing a –2 penalty on ranged attacks and can knock down Tiny or smaller creatures. Full details on rain and wind appear on pages 94–95 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

♛ **Mora (hamlet):** Conventional, Magical; AL NG; Population 312; 100

9
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THE VILLAGE OF MORA
one square=50 feet

gp limit; Assets 1,550 gp; Isolated (100% human).

Authority Figures: Matriarch Thulsa, female human Ari3 (deceased); Vargo, Karta, Umlat, and Fano, male humans Ari2 (clan leaders); the Zombie Master, male human Sor8 (missing).

Notes: Mora is comprised of four clans: the Boar Clan, Ape Clan, Tiger Clan, and Sea Turtle Clan. Each clan believes itself to share the blood of its totem animal. The clan leaders are united under a matriarch, who is chief of all the clans yet considered a member of none. The matriarch selects an advisor—currently her adult son, Jodri. The matriarch rules in all things temporal but defers to the Zombie Master in spiritual matters.

The Zombie Master leads the Cult of the Walking Dead, a secret society whose members wear lurid bodypaint deathmasks during ceremonies. They revere the village ancestors, and at these ceremonies the "Walking Ancestors" (zombies) are called forth by the cult for whatever purposes they deem necessary. All of the villagers participate in the worship of their clan ancestors, but they typically shun the Walking Ancestors and stay out of the burial grounds unless accompanied there by the Zombie Master for a funeral service. Though they fear the Cult of the Walking Dead, they view the Zombie Master as the spiritual protector of their village.

1. Beach (EL 7)

Torrential rain continues to pour from the inky sky, obscuring the surroundings to some extent. A verge of plant growth not far ahead borders a wide sandy beach. A dozen outrigger canoes of different sizes have been pulled up and upturned on this green verge, next to a massive mound of something, perhaps soaking leather hides. Through the downpour one can make out two sets of lights to the north, both appearing to originate from small clusters of buildings.

The Sea Turtle Clan and Boar Clan make their homes closest to the shore. In the darkness and downpour, it is nearly impossible to make out any other details of the village from the shore.

Creature: The mound of soaking leather hides is in fact an elasmosaurus that was recently washed up on the shore by the surf. The creature is recovering its strength now, and although it is awake, it's still fatigued (–2 to Strength and Dexterity). Despite this, it lashes out at anyone who approaches within reach.

Elasmosaurus: hp 111; *Monster Manual* 60.

2. Sea Turtle Clan

A circular cluster of buildings comes into focus in the darkness ahead—wooden huts built up on stilts. The structures have thatch roofs, and the warm glow of fires comes from several windows and doorways. Strangely, no ladders or stairs span the eight-foot gap between floor and ground for any of the huts. A wooden statue of a sea turtle stands in the center of the cluster of buildings.

These are the holdings of the Sea Turtle Clan. A successful Spot check (DC 10) notices a few people peering out from windows and curtained doorways. If the party is not threatening and addresses the obviously nervous villagers, one of them emerges onto the ledge in front of his hut to identify himself as Karta, the clan leader. He speaks in a local dialect known as Olman; the PCs likely need to resort to a *potion of tongues* to understand him. Karta and the villagers are initially indifferent to the party once they see that they are not fiends summoned by the storm. As a result, the PCs must succeed at a Diplomacy check (DC 15) to change Karta's attitude to friendly before he lowers a ladder to them. If the party fails to befriend Karta, they can still ask him about getting supplies but they'll need to carry on the conversation from the ground. If someone clambers up to the huts (Climb check DC 10) without first being invited, the villagers consider it an attack and will defend themselves to the best of their ability. Each villager is a 1st-level commoner, and there are 120 adults in this clan village.

Karta's hut is the largest in this area, and serves as a communal hall and council chamber. A fire burns in a stone-lined depression in the center of the floor. It hisses and sputters as rain falls through the smoke hole cut above it. Several crude oil lamps rest in niches around the walls, providing further illumination.

A few dozen people, all of similar appearance with dark-complexioned, finely chiseled features and long, dark hair are gathered in groups on reed mats. Some talk quietly and some stare into the fire, but most watch the PCs intently. A few sit by themselves and quietly chant mantras of protection. Several of the men grip steel-tipped spears or long daggers.

Allow the party to interact with Karta as they wish, but he soon works up the courage to tell them the village's circumstances. If asked for supplies or aid with the ship, he says they cannot help the party until the storm passes and then sets into the tale of Mora's woes as given below.

"Dark times have come to our village of Mora. Usually the typhoons come and go in a day, maybe two, but this storm has stayed for over a week. It grows in intensity and never seems to move on. It is a bad omen, for it is not even typhoon season. No, it is a storm of evil spirits, and it brings dread to our village.

"Ill luck came with the storm. People began disappearing. Those who search for them disappear as well. The rains weakened the soil of the slope above the village and brought a mudslide that completely buried Tiger Clan. We have found no survivors or bodies, and the ground there remains treacherous. It has also blocked our only route

to the other villages of the island where we might get help. The only other way out is by sea, but the waters are too rough for our canoes.

"The only man in Mora who has the power to send this storm away is the Zombie Master, but he was one of the first to disappear. With him gone, no one tends to the Walking Ancestors, and they grow restless and seek to be among the living again. Things could only grow worse if the dead are allowed to walk unchecked.

"The matriarch's son, Jodri, went to the pyramid two days ago to see if he could find the Zombie Master. The matriarch urged him not to go. She said it was too dangerous, but he was young and brash and went anyway. He, too, disappeared until this very night. As evening fell he returned to his mother's hut at the Boar Clan. She joyously asked him for news, and he buried his knife to the hilt in her breastbone. He then immediately fell dead to the floor beside her.

"But now, you are here. Travelers from beyond the storm, you can call back the evil and set things right! Our matriarch is dead and the Zombie Master is gone. Our old men and women chant the protection spells, but they are not strong enough to drive away the evil spirits of this storm. You must do what we cannot. Call back the evil of this storm and quell the Walking Ancestors before all is lost!"

If the party asks for a reward, Karta promises them just about anything in his power. The village doesn't have much wealth, but they can certainly provide all of the tools and supplies necessary for repairs and to restock the *Indira*. He also assures them that if they can rescue the Zombie Master he can reward them with his magic.

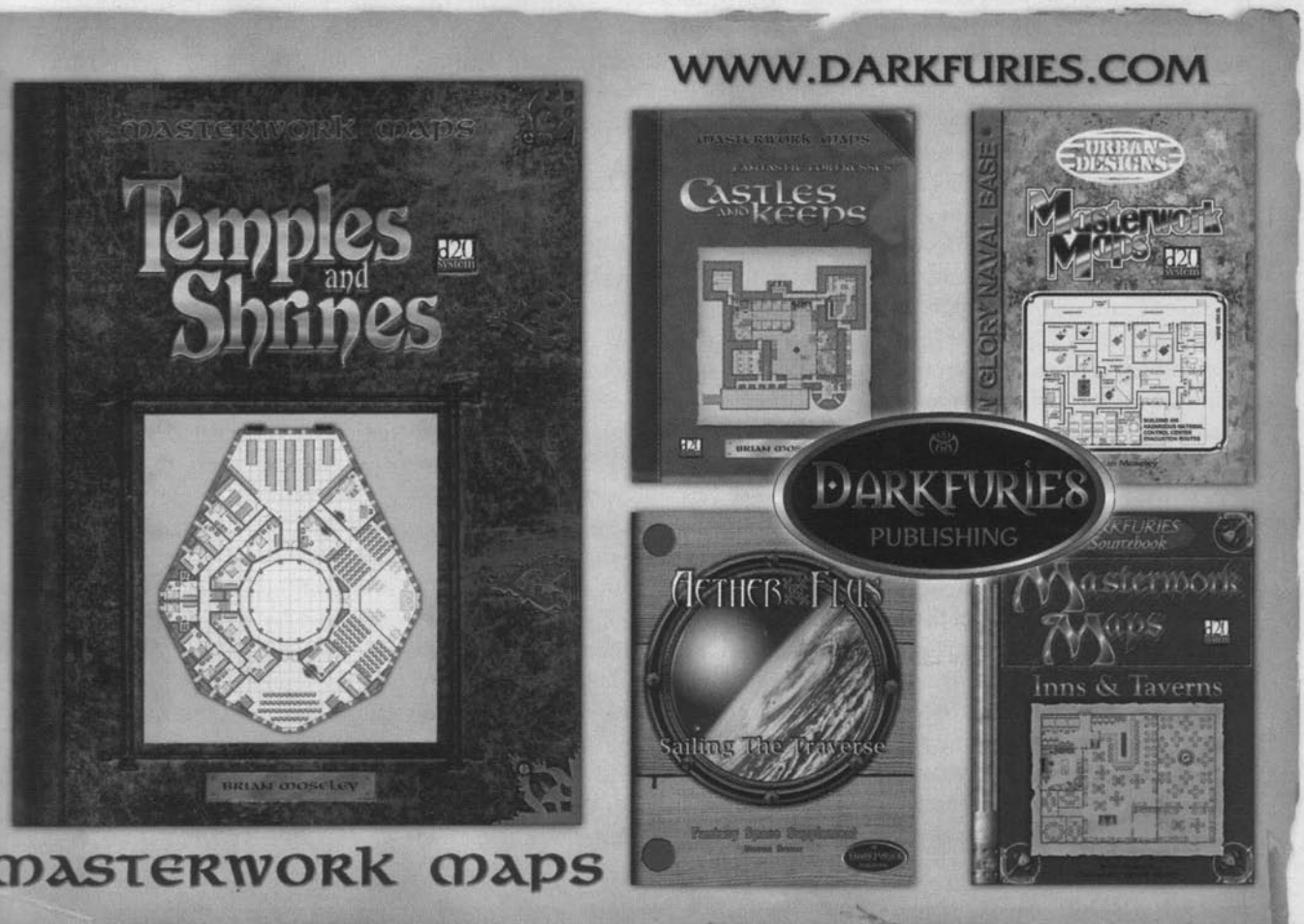
Karta can give the party general details about the village and the locations in it. No one has gone to the burial grounds or the pyramid since the Zombie Master disappeared other than Jodri. Likewise, no other member of the Cult of the Walking Dead (the Zombie Master's followers) has been seen since the storm began. If the PCs agree to help Mora, Karta gives the party's leader one of his personal charms. This charm is nonmagical, but it signifies to the other residents of Mora that the PCs are here to help.

3. Boar Clan

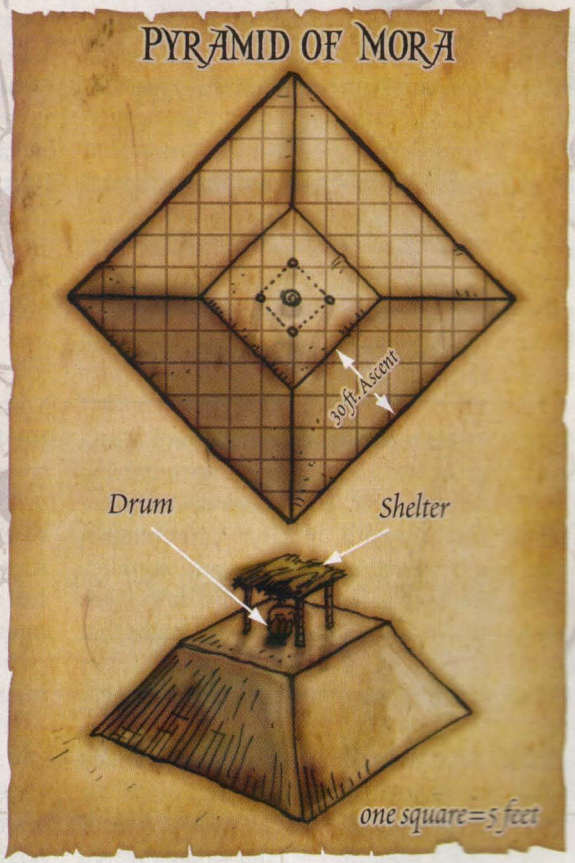
This clan holding is very similar to the Sea Turtle Clan (area **2**) save that the central statue of a boar dominates it. Kulkan is the clan leader here and can give the same information as Karta. Furthermore, the matriarch's hut is located in this clan holding (area **6**), and Kulkan can direct the party to it if asked. There are 138 adults in this clan.

4. Ape Clan

This clan holding is similar in appearance to the Sea Turtle and Boar Clan areas, except a large wooden



carving of an ape occupies the center space between the huts. The other major difference is that this clan holding is completely abandoned. Members of the clan began disappearing shortly after the storms came, including clan leader Fano. After the mudslide hit the Tiger Clan, those of the Ape Clan who remained relocated to the areas of their cousins in the Sea Turtle and Boar Clans. A search of the huts shows that everyone left in a hurry but reveals nothing of major value.



5. Mudslide

A bare, muddy slope rises steeply to the east—a vast morass of mud where a village once stood. Here and there broken timbers from flattened huts protrude from the muck. Rising like a sentinel from the center of the wreckage is a mud-splattered wooden statue of a tiger. It is canted at a crazy angle from the impact of the mudslide. There are no signs of survivors among the ruins.

The ground here is several feet deep in mud and quite treacherous to walk on. Movement in this area is equal to that of a shallow bog as described on page 88 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Fortunately, there are no encounters in this area. If the party searches this area they find no trace of bodies or survivors, only the muddy wreckage of the Tiger Clan buildings. However, a character with the Track feat who makes a Survival check (DC 21) finds a single webbed track like that of a giant frog. This track was left by the bullywugs who took all the survivors and victims out of the wreckage and into the catacombs after the mudslide. Because of the constant rain, there is no trail or other tracks to be found.

The only way to leave the village by land is by the road that once climbed the muddy slope and eventually breached the dense jungle that surrounds the village. Thanks to the mudslide and continuing rain, it now requires numerous Climb checks (DC 25) to make the slippery ascent.

6. Matriarch's Hut

The glow of dozens of candles illuminates the windows of this stilted hut. Its eves are festooned with sodden orchids and palm branches. A small group of somber mourners bearing oil lamps keeps a silent vigil on the ledge around its doorway.

These eight mourners represent all of the clans except the Tiger Clan, whose members have all disappeared. Unless the party is accompanied by one of the clan leaders or carries a clan leader's charm, the mourners attempt to prevent the party from entering the matriarch's hut. If questioned, they can provide the same information given under area 2. They also express their anger that no one from the Cult of the Walking Dead has come to perform last rites for the dead in the hut.

Inside, the furnishings have been draped with the wide, white leaves of indigenous albino plants, the sign of mourning in Mora. Two bodies lie side by side on a reed mat. These are the matriarch and her son. If brought here by a clan leader, the party can examine the bodies without resistance from the mourners.

Matriarch Thulsa is freshly dead. A large bloody stab wound mars her breast, and the knife used to kill her lies at her feet. It has been cleaned of blood but is easily recognizable by anyone in the village as the hunting knife of her son Jodri. Jodri's corpse, however, is a bit more mysterious. It too is quite dead, but it bears no wounds, and the skin has a grayish pallor to it.

A Spot check (DC 10) reveals that the corpse's eyes have been removed and replaced with small stones painted to look like eyes (the villagers have not yet noticed this detail). A Heal check (DC 18) reveals that the body has been dead for more than a day, and that the eyes were removed post mortem. A Search check (DC 14) uncovers a deep stab wound at the base of the skull, hidden by Jodri's long hair. This stab entered the brain and was obviously the cause of death. The wound itself is fairly clean and dry, lending further credence to the fact that Jodri has been dead for some time.

The truth of the matter is that two days ago, Jodri went to the pyramid against his mother's wishes in search of the Zombie Master. He was captured by a group of bullywugs, who took him to the Zombie Master. The corrupted protector of the village killed Jodri and animated him as a zombie. He then cast the spell *eyes of the zombie* and replaced the zombie's eyes with painted fakes to temporarily fool the villagers (this spell is

described on page 94 of the *Book of Vile Darkness*, which is not necessary to play "Torrents of Dread"). Seeing through the zombie's eye sockets and controlling its movements, the Zombie Master directed it to enter the matriarch's hut and murder her. When this was completed, the Zombie Master ended his animation of the zombie, rendering it an inert corpse once again. *Detect magic* does not detect any lingering auras on the corpse or stones; these faint auras have long since dissipated.

7. Clan Burial Grounds (EL varies)

This large area is separated from the rest of the village by a stake fence running around its entire circumference. Four open gateways lead through the fence, and the interior is further divided into four sections by the fencing. Many earthen mounds are visible throughout the enclosure, with a larger one at its center with some sort of structure on it.

The burial ground is divided into a section for each clan. Various wooden totems and effigies festoon each section. The fence is decorative and only 3 feet high, so it poses little obstacle to the party. The dozens of burial mounds here date back many generations. At the center of the grounds, where all of the fences come together in a hub, rises a larger mound topped with a longhouse. This is where the Cult of the Walking Dead performed many of its rituals.

Creatures: Every minute spent in the burial grounds brings a 25% chance of an encounter with "Walking Ancestors." Without the guidance of the Zombie Master or his cultists, these mindless undead guardians have taken to roaming freely and attack whatever they see. If an encounter is rolled consult the table below to determine what type of undead is encountered.

Roll	Result
01–30	1d4 skeletons
31–60	1d6 zombies
61–85	1 totem zombie
86–100	1d3 totem zombies and 2d4 human commoner zombies

Totem zombies are created when an especially revered warrior of the village dies. Through a special ritual, the Zombie Master removes the head from the corpse and replaces it with the head of a totem animal from the warrior's clan. A totem zombie is similar to a standard zombie, save that it is much faster, has an animal's head, and gains a bite or gore attack as applicable for its clan. Determine the type of head that is on the zombie based on the portion of the burial ground where it is encountered.

Human Skeleton: hp 6 each; *Monster Manual* 226.

Human Zombie: hp 16 each; *Monster Manual* 266.

Totem Zombie: CR 1; Medium undead; HD 2d12+3; hp 22; Init –1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, bite or gore); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, bite or gore) and –3 melee (1d6, slam); SQ damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Feats: Toughness[B].

Development: A search of the longhouse finds it to be almost completely void of furnishings or items of interest. The Cult of the Walking Dead did not keep much here. A successful Search check (DC 20) finds a secret trapdoor that opens onto a ladder descending into an earthen shaft. This leads to area **C1** of the catacombs.

8. Village Fields (EL varies)

Several pens holding pigs, goats, and chickens belonging to the villagers stand near the buildings. Beyond these pens, open fields of vegetables and sugar cane extend to a central mound.

Creatures: Every 10 minutes spent in these fields brings a 15% chance of encountering Walking Ancestors that have wandered away from the untended burial grounds. These encounters are always with 1d4 zombies led by a totem zombie.

Human Zombie: hp 16 each; *Monster Manual* 266.

Totem Zombie: hp 22 each; see area 7.

9. Jungle

The jungle encloses the village on all sides except to the south. Travel through this terrain in the storm is exhausting and dangerous; the further one travels from Mora, the larger the local wildlife becomes. Refer to "Exploring the Isle of Dread" for guidelines on running encounters in the jungle.

10. Earthen Mound and Pyramid (EL 6)

Squatting in the center of the sodden fields is a large earthen mound. Only 3 feet high, the clearly artificial mound has a level surface and squared off edges that are starting to slop away from all the rain. In the center of the square mound, barely visible in the deluge, is a thirty-foot-tall flat-topped pyramid of stone.

This mound and pyramid are the central assembly point for Mora, and where the matriarch held councils. The Zombie Master and his Cult of the Walking Dead held many ceremonies before the populace here as well. It was here that Jodri came in search of the Zombie Master, and from here he disappeared. The villagers have been too terror-stricken by all the misfortune associated with the storm to venture out here, but all signs seem to point to this pyramid as the likely focus of the doom that has come to Mora.

Atop the pyramid is a small structure. A wooden mallet suspended

by a rope from the roof is used to sound the alarm or summon the clans to council. A Search check (DC 20) at the base of the drum reveals a concealed shaft fitted with a wooden ladder that descends through the heart of the pyramid to area **C8** in the catacombs below.

Creatures: One of the groups of creatures that approached the koprus to offer their servitude is a tribe of bullywugs. These frog-like humanoids have long lurked in the marshy interior of the island, and the unnatural storm drove them out and eventually into contact with the koprus. Five bullywugs stand guard in this stone hut, and are prepared to attack anyone who approaches. They are completely loyal to the koprus and fight to the death. Characters taken alive are brought below to the Zombie Master.

Bullywug War3 (5): CR 2; Medium humanoid (aquatic); HD 3d8+12; hp 25 each; Init +0; Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grap +3; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (1d6, masterwork shortspear) or +4 ranged (1d6, javelin); Space 5 ft./5 ft.; SA —; SQ amphibious, marsh move; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will –1; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 7, Wis 7, Cha 7; *Monsters of Faerûn* 25.

Marsh Move (Ex): Bullywugs suffer no movement penalties for moving in marshes or mud.

Skills: Climb +6, Hide +0 (+6 in marshy terrain), Swim +8.

Feats: Toughness, Weapon Focus (javelin).

Languages: Olman.

Possessions: Leather armor, masterwork shortspear, 5 javelins, *potion of cure moderate wounds*.

Tactics: The bullywugs remain hidden until the PCs come within 30 feet, at which point they rise from their crouching positions to fling javelins at the party. Remember that the wind inflicts a –2 penalty on ranged attack rolls. Once they've thrown all their javelins, the bullywugs remain atop the pyramid and wait for characters to approach.

Development: It's likely that the PCs won't be able to deal with the terrors lurking in the catacombs below on one foray, and retreat at some point to rest and recuperate. If they do so, the Zombie Master and the koprus take note of the fact that the catacombs have been discovered, and the next time the PCs try to enter them via this route they find the pyramid guarded by 2d4 more bullywugs and one of the koprus from area **C22**, who do their best to prevent anyone else from entering the catacombs. These bullywugs fight to the death, but the kopru flees into the catacombs if reduced to 10 hit points or less, using its swim speed to retreat to area **C22** to report to the others there.

Chapter Two: Catacombs of Dread

Eventually, the PCs should learn of the existence of the catacombs below Mora. These earthen tunnels were dug centuries ago by the Cult of the Walking Dead for the internment of prominent clan members and as a place to animate the "Walking Ancestors." The commonfolk of Mora have no idea that these catacombs exist; they traditionally left all matters of the dead to Zombie Master and his cult.

The catacombs are crudely dug from the earth and upper layers of bedrock. They are shored with timbers spaced at uneven intervals, and although they appear unstable in places they are actually quite sound. The tunnels average 8 feet high and are currently unlit; the bullywugs that lurk in these caves use crude oil lanterns to see.

The catacombs' close proximity to the surface means that the storm has flooded most of these tunnels. Water constantly drips down the walls, and about three feet of murky standing water floods the tunnels. Medium creatures can wade through this water, but at the cost of 4 squares of movement per actual square traveled. If they choose, they can instead swim; Small or smaller creatures have no such choice and must swim. The water provides cover for Medium or larger creatures. Smaller creatures gain improved cover (+8 bonus to AC, +4 bonus on Reflex saves). Medium or larger creatures can crouch as a move action to gain improved cover. Creatures with improved cover take a –10 penalty on attacks against creatures that aren't also underwater. Wading creatures take a –2 penalty on Move Silently checks.

Doors in the catacombs are roughly made of split logs banded with cords of vine. None are locked, but due to the flooding they have swollen and are considered stuck. The secret doors are constructed of rough stone and have been painted to resemble the sediments and rock of the walls. They are unaffected by the flooding.

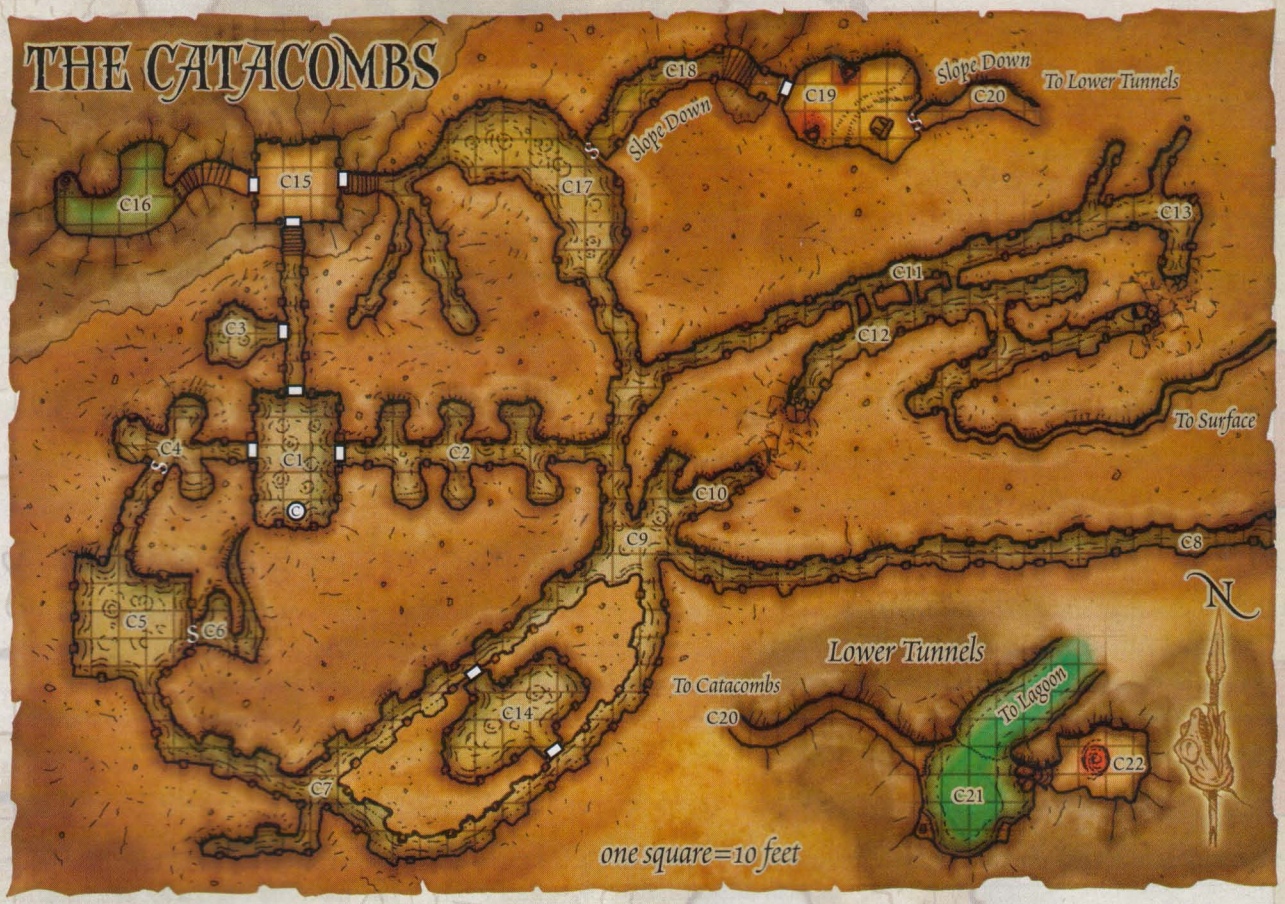
Simple Wooden Door: 1 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 10; Open DC 13; Break DC 15.

Stone Secret Door: 4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28.

C1. Commons (EL 6)

A shaft rises into the ceiling of this dugout chamber near the center of the south wall. A ladder ascends into the shaft above. Wooden beams buttress the muddy walls and are set into the dripping ceiling. Several of the support beams have clay oil lamps suspended from them, but all have been extinguished by the steady rivulets falling from the ceiling and walls. The floor of this chamber is flooded with muddy water that laps the walls in wavelets from the constant deluge. Several wooden chairs float in the flood, along with other bits and pieces of debris. Two wooden tables have been pushed up against the walls. Three vine-bound wooden doors exit the chamber, and the center of the room is dominated by a huge mound of floating vegetation.

This room served as the common area for the Cult of the Walking Dead. The cultists lived simply, and



this unornamented chamber shows it. The cultists used this chamber for gatherings and meals.

Creature: The huge mound of vegetation is in fact a tendriculos that crept into the catacombs not long after the storm began. The koprus used several sacrifices to lure it into this room to guard the second entrance into the catacombs. The monstrous plant surges into motion and attacks anyone who enters this room, and pursues as far as it can if its prey flees.

Tendriculos: hp 94; *Monster Manual* 241.

Development: If the PCs defeat the tendriculos, the bullywugs in area **C4** investigate the room a few rounds later. Upon finding the tendriculos dead, the bullywugs try to make a break for area **C2**. If the PCs look particularly exhausted by their battle, the bullywugs instead try to capture them for the Zombie Master.

C2. Cultist Cells

These six nondescript alcoves dug into the walls of the tunnel have little in the way of furnishings. A few personal items float in the water, and at the back of each is a dug-out sleeping bench lined with a reed mat.

These small chambers were each shared by two cultists who rotated the use of the sleeping bench.

Treasure: A successful Search (DC 20) of one of these alcoves uncovers an item left behind by the cultists. The alcoves contain the following treasures: a jade pectoral engraved with the image of a serpent worth 250 gp, a pouch of 7 pearls worth 100 gp each, a copper ring worth 25 gp, and a painted wicker mask worth 75 gp.

C3. Storage

This flooded room is awash with floating baskets, clay vessels, and all manner of junk. Wooden shelves built into the walls hold additional chests, bags, and bins. Dangling from the dripping ceiling are cured meats and various tubers and vegetables.

This room served as general storage for the cultists. It held special items as well as all of their mundane needs from provisions to items and garments used in their various rituals for the dead.

Treasure: A successful Search check (DC 15) locates a large case formed from a bamboo log with capped ends split lengthwise and fastened with cords. Inside this case, held in leather flasks, are 3 potions of *cure light wounds*, a *potion of barkskin +2*, a *potion of bull's strength*, a *potion of remove paralysis*, and a *potion of cure serious wounds*.

C4. Occupied Cells (EL 4)

A group of three alcoves are dug into the walls of this chamber. A few personal items float in the water, and at

the back of each alcove is a dug-out sleeping bench lined with a reed mat.

These three alcoves served as living quarters for the three highest-ranking cultists; they didn't have to share bunks with others. These alcoves otherwise have the same design as those in area **C2**. The secret door to area **C5** can be found with a successful Search check (DC 20).

Creatures: Three bullywug warriors left their guard post to search for loot in the catacombs. Upon entering area **C1**, they were attacked by the tendriculos and managed to flee from it to this room, but they're too afraid of it to try to escape. They've spent the last five hours exhaustively searching this chamber for anything that could help them escape. Although one of them found a poorly hidden magic scimitar in one of the alcoves, they just aren't smart enough to find the secret door and are trying to work up enough courage to run through area **C1** to safety elsewhere in the catacombs.

Bullywug War3 (3): hp 25 each; see page 58. One of the bullywugs fights with the magic scimitar he found.

Treasure: The magic weapon the bullywugs have found is a *+1 thundering scimitar* that sheds light as a torch. This weapon may seem incongruous found here, and with cause. Centuries ago, it belonged to a mainland pirate chieftain who used the Pearl Sea as his personal demesne. The matriarch of Mora at the time gathered a large host from among all the neighboring villages and led them against his pirate stronghold. She killed the pirate chieftain and took his sword as a trophy, and was eventually buried with it. Recently, a covetous cultist discovered the sword in the burial ground and hid it in his alcove.

C5. Chamber of the Boar Clan (EL 6)

A macabre sight haunts this flooded chamber. Eight humanoid corpses stand motionless in the waist-deep water. Each corpse has had its head removed and a mummified boar's head has been attached to the stump with what look like dozens of thin wooden spikes. Several other preserved boar heads and skulls adorn the walls.

This chamber served as the burial preparation area for the Boar Clan. The honored dead were transformed into totem zombies by the cultists, so their bodies could guard their spirits. Wooden tables for preparing the bodies float against the west wall, and hanging from some of the overhead beams are the tools necessary for the removal and attachment of the necessary heads.

The secret door to the east can be found with a successful Search check (DC 20).

Creatures: The eight upright corpses are in fact totem zombies the Zombie Master is storing here for later use. They have been commanded to remain motionless until they see anyone other than the Zombie Master or bullywugs, at which point they attack.

Totem Zombie (8): hp 22 each; see page 57.

C6. The Hidden Ones (EL 5)

A foul odor issues from this small chamber. Opposite the door, a grill of iron bars blocks entry into the

eastern half of the room. The central section of the bars is bent outward and covered with deep furrows, scratches, and tiny spots of white.

Two decades ago, two cultists took their death fetish to a dangerous level when they secretly began to consume some of the corpses entombed in the catacombs. When the Zombie Master discovered their activities, he was horrified and had a prison cell excavated here. He threw the defilers in here and walled them in with a large iron grill that had been scavenged years before from a shipwreck, and then left them to starve. When the Zombie Master checked on them a few weeks later, he noted with grim satisfaction that the two men had died and become ghasts. He intended to let them forever languish, in constant hunger, as punishment for their sins. The ghasts have managed to gnaw a head-sized hole in the bars (the white spots are jagged teeth embedded in the iron) in the days since the storm began, and now the entire iron grill has been loosened by the flooding.

Iron Grill: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 42; Break DC 15.

Creatures: The two ghasts react violently when the PCs enter this room, driven into a frenzy of hunger and rage. They both immediately begin to bash against the iron grill in a frenzy; chances are they break through sooner than later, since the ghasts have a Strength check of +3.

Ghasts (2): hp 25 each; *Monster Manual* 119.

C7. Catacomb Tunnels (EL 1-4)

The walls of these tunnels are broken at irregular intervals by burial niches just a few inches up from the murky flood waters. Some still bear mummified remains bound by cords in a fetal position. In others, only a few bones remain. None of these burials include any valuable funerary items.

Creatures: As the characters wander these tunnels, there's a 10% chance per hour of an encounter with the Walking Dead. If an encounter occurs, it is with a group of 1d4 skeletons and 1d4 zombies.

Human Skeleton (1d4): hp 6 each; *Monster Manual* 226.

Human Zombie (1d4): hp 16 each; *Monster Manual* 266.

C8. Pyramid Entrance

This catacomb tunnel travels east another 350 feet off the map before ending at a ladder rising through a shaft in the ceiling. This shaft rises through the earth core of the pyramid at Mora's center.

C9. Roots and Limbs (EL 5)

A particularly dense tangle of tree roots have grown down through the ceiling here, shrouding the tunnel in a twisted mess.

Creatures: The Zombie Master took advantage of these roots in designing a rather morbid defense for the catacombs. Buried in the floor and ceiling of the tunnel here, with only their arms and faces exposed, are 12 zombies (6 in the floor and 6 in the ceiling). The tree roots and zombie arms are difficult to tell apart. The whole effect grants the zombies a +10 bonus on Hide checks (for a total bonus of +9). Characters that come within reach of an embedded zombie are immediately attacked. Additionally, the earth and stone encasing the zombies grants them an armor bonus of +4 to their Armor Class. See the close-up map for the embedded zombies' exact positions.

Embedded Zombies (12): AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Spd 0 ft.; hp 16 each; *Monster Manual* 266.

C10. Collapsed Tunnel

The tunnel here is blocked by an ancient collapse.

C11. Shambling Menace (EL 8)

The groan of support beams echoes above the sounds of the water every now and then, and fissures mar the southern wall where earth and stone have collapsed away in places. Thick tangles of roots hang from the roof or protrude randomly from the walls.

The fissures in the wall between this area and area **C12** may look dangerous, but the walls and ceiling

are still sturdy and there is no danger of further collapse. A Small or smaller creature can crawl through one of these fissures to area **C12**. A Medium creature can squeeze through with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 30).

Creature: A particularly cruel shambling mound, intrigued by the sudden storm, found its way into Mora not long after the storm began. The Zombie Master's cultists first encountered it when they harvested survivors from the mudslide that destroyed the Tiger Clan. The Zombie Master quickly realized the evil plant would make a powerful ally, and offered it a place in the catacombs as a guardian in return for regular offerings of flesh. The shambling mound has taken up residence in this long passageway, and reacts violently to intrusions by anything it doesn't recognize as allies of the Zombie Master.

Shambling Mound: hp 60; AL NE; *Monster Manual* 222.

C12. Abandoned Catacombs (EL 7)

This section of the catacombs looks superficially similar to those in area **C7**, but has been sealed off from the other catacombs for several years.

Creature: This section of the catacombs collapsed nearly two decades ago when a monstrous creation of Mora's prior Zombie Master went berserk. This creature is a horrifying flesh golem, composed from the body parts of numerous wild boars, sea turtles, tigers, apes, and humans, patched together in a multi-legged obscenity that stands nearly ten feet tall and nearly as wide. The flesh golem killed the previous Zombie Master when it went berserk, and the terrified cultists could only think to seal it into these caves by collapsing them while the monster smashed the Zombie Master's body into pulp.

The horrid flesh golem still exists today, waiting quietly for more intruders to punish. It lurks near the east end of this area, and although it can hear sounds of activity in area **C11** through the numerous fissures, it does not react until this catacomb tunnel is actually entered.

Flesh Golem: hp 79 (currently 66); *Monster Manual* 135.

C13. Dead End (EL 4)

The catacomb tunnel makes an abrupt turn here and ends at a collapse.

Creatures: Two bullywugs have rebelled against the magical call of the storm and the koprus' domination, and now hide in this dead end while they wait for the Zombie Master and his minions to leave the catacombs so they can escape without being noticed. The shambling mound couldn't tell that the bullywugs had regained their senses and let them pass without confrontation.

Bullywug War3 (2): hp 25 each; see page 58.

Development: Although they're fairly dull-witted, the two bullywugs aren't stupid enough to mistake the PCs for locals. Their initial attitude is unfriendly; if the PCs can adjust their attitude to friendly with a successful Diplomacy or Intimidate check (DC 25) the bullywugs beg to be escorted from these catacombs. As payment, they can tell the PCs what they know of the current situation. Their low intelligence prevents detailed information, but they can provide the PCs with a rough description of the layout of the catacombs. They don't know about area **C6** or the secret door in area **C17**, and haven't been into area **C15** so they don't know about area **C16**. They can tell the PCs that a lot more bullywugs lurk in area **C14**, including the "boss chief." They can also tell the PCs about the Zombie Master, whom they have seen elsewhere in the catacombs or above ground. They haven't seen the koprus clearly yet, and describe them as "scary eel peoples" with "voices from thinking that make us do things."

If the PCs make the bullywugs helpful (DC 40), they agree to accompany the PCs and provide what combat assistance they can; they have little loyalty to their kin.

Of course, if the PCs attack, the bullywugs fight back as best they can.

C14. Chamber of the Sea Turtle Clan (EL 7)

Whatever once furnished this flooded room has either been removed or otherwise simply floated away. The only remaining furnishings are several great sea turtle shells that hang on the walls, along with numerous decomposing skulls of disturbingly large sea turtles. A single turtle shell has been lashed to a ceiling beam. Beneath it is suspended a flickering oil lamp.

Once the burial preparation chamber for the Sea Turtle Clan, this room now serves as the primary bullywug lair.

Creatures: The main bullywug group lured into the koprus' snare by the storm have chosen this room as their lair while they await new orders. Two bullywug warriors lurk in this room, led by a bullywug barbarian named Gloorunk, a hulking bullywug who wears armor made from deinonychus hides. The bullywugs are all dominated by the koprus, but even if this effect is dispelled they remain hostile to the PCs.

Bullywug War3 (2): hp 25 each; see page 58.

Gloorunk, Male Bullywug Bbn4: CR 4; Medium humanoid (aquatic); HD 4d12+19; hp 47; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +4; Grap +7; Atk/Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+5/×3, *+1 spear*) or +5 ranged (1d6+3, javelin); Space 5 ft./5 ft.; SA rage 2/day; SQ amphibious, fast movement, marsh move, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 7, Wis 5, Cha 10; *Monsters of Faerûn* 25.

Skills: Climb +8, Hide +0 (+6 in marshy terrain), Intimidate +7, Swim +9.

Feats: Iron Will, Weapon Focus (spear).

Languages: Olman.

Possessions: *+1 hide armor, +1 spear,* 5 javelins, 2 potions of *cure moderate wounds.*

Treasure: A successful Search check (DC 14) locates the bullywugs' cache hidden in one of the shells hanging from the walls. Here they have hidden all of the treasures they have looted from the catacomb burials, including 2 bloodstones worth 50 gp each, 6 polished hematite mirrors worth 15 gp each, a copper death mask worth 55 gp, a vial of antitoxin, a 3-foot length of silver-plated chain worth 150 gp, a ewer of hammered gold worth 95 gp, and chunk of brown-green garnet carved as a sea turtle and worth 160 gp.

C15. Chamber of the Ape Clan (EL 4)

The limestone bedrock rises in this area, and the cultists were forced to tunnel over it rather than through it. As such the flooded passages end at crudely chipped limestone steps rising out of the water and ending at a door.

This chamber is dry, relative to the rest of this complex. Water still leaks through the ceiling, but it only collects in puddles on the smoothed limestone floor before draining down the stairs into the flooded tunnels beyond. Shelving suspended from the wooden beams holds all manner of pottery jars and wicker baskets. The skulls of apes and baboons rest alongside the various containers. Parts of the walls without shelving are decorated with the pelts of apes spread for display. A table in the center of the room holds the corpse of a local villager, obviously dead for some time. Its head has been removed and is nowhere to be found, but a carefully preserved baboon's head rests beside it.

The cult prepared prominent members of the Ape Clan for animation here. The baskets and jars hold the various unguents and ingredients necessary for the preservation and treatment of cadavers, as well as tools for the decapitation and reattachment of totem heads. The corpse on the table has not been animated.

Creatures: This room is occupied by 5 totem zombies of the Ape Clan. They are under orders to destroy anyone other than the Zombie Master who enters.

Totem Zombies (5): hp 22 each; see page 57.

C16. Treacherous Corridor (EL 3)

The passage beyond the door follows a natural seam in the bedrock rather than the muddy combination of earth and stone in the previous tunnels. Ahead, the passage descends a set of crude steps chipped into the stone. The constant dripping has left the stone steps quite slippery. Beyond, the passageway opens into a large natural cavern, its walls and floor glistening and bare. In the distance, the flickering light of a torch beckons.

The flickering torchlight comes from a single everburning torch, placed here to lure intruders into the clutches of the creature dwelling in the cavern.

Creature: A gelatinous cube lurks in this cavern, once the primary method of disposal for unneeded animal parts for the cult and now simply a hungry menace to explorers.

Gelatinous Cube: hp 50; *Monster Manual* 201.

Treasure: The gelatinous cube's latest victims were a party of mainland rogues who infiltrated these tunnels several weeks before the koprus arrived, in hopes of uncovering a legendary treasure. A successful Search check in the alcove (DC 15) reveals the following items wedged in a nook: a longsword, a masterwork rapier, 3 daggers, a chain shirt, several belt buckles, a set of thieves' tools, a number of arrowheads, a masterwork light steel shield, 2 moonstones worth 25 gp each, and a scattering of 45 sp.

C17. Chamber of the Tiger Clan (EL 5)

The skulls and pelts of tigers adorn the walls of this chamber. Torches mounted on wooden support beams flicker fitfully in these sodden conditions. Tables and bins have been stacked against the northern wall, clearing out the central area of this flooded room.

This room is where the dead of the Tiger Clan were prepared for burial or joining the ranks of the Walking Ancestors. Unlike the other preparation rooms, no totem zombies lurk here. Likewise, the materials and tools necessary for their preparation have been shoved into an unruly pile by the secret door. This door can be found with a successful Search check (DC 20).

Creatures: After the Zombie Master betrayed and murdered his cultists, he animated them and left them here to serve as guards. By doing so, he hopes to prevent any treachery on the part of the bullywugs, whom he fears as much as the koprus.

Human Zombies (8): hp 16 each; *Monster Manual* 266.

C18. Flooded Passage (EL 4)

Dark waters flood this dripping corridor, and the ceiling lowers until it is only a few feet above the level of the water.

The entire tunnel slopes downward in this passageway, forming a natural water trap. The water becomes 6 feet deep along much of this corridor.

Creature: Seated upon the stairs at the east end of this passageway and listening in the darkness for

intruders is a bullywug cleric named Mlurok, the spiritual leader of the bullywug tribe. The koprus ordered the Zombie Master to allow this bullywug access past the undead guards in area **C17** but did not specify how far it could go. As a result, this bullywug has been restricted to this small section of corridor, cold and tired and hungry. Only the *domination* effect keeps it at its post.

Mlurok, Female Bullywug Clr3: CR 3; Medium humanoid (aquatic); HD 3d8+9; hp 24; Init +0; Spd 15 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +2; Grap +2; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (1d6, masterwork shortspear) or +4 ranged (1d6, masterwork shortspear); SA spells, rebuke/command undead; SQ amphibious, marsh move, summoning; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 7, Wis 14, Cha 9.

Summoning (Sp): When a bullywug uses a *summon monster* spell, there is a 50% chance that one more monster than would normally be summoned appears. In such cases, there's a 25% chance that summoned monsters are not be under the bullywug's control, and attack random targets.

Skills: Concentration +6, Knowledge (arcana) +1.

Feats: Blind Fight, Weapon Focus (shortspear).

Languages: Olman.

Cleric Spells Prepared (4/3+1/2+1; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds* (4); 1st—*cure light wounds, protection from law*, summon monster I* (2); 2nd—*cure moderate wounds, summon monster II, shatter**.

*Domain spell. *Domains*: Chaos (cast chaos spells at +1 caster level), Water (turn fire creatures or rebuke water creatures 2/day).

Possessions: *+1 breastplate*, masterwork shortspear, *wand of cure light wounds* (21 charges), dead sea snake (divine focus).

C19. Lair of the Zombie Master (EL 8)

This chamber is damp with small puddles on the floor, but is not flooded like the rest of the catacombs. Small stalactites droop from the ceiling like sharks' teeth. Two bronze braziers on tripods near the walls bathe the room in a reddish radiance and give off occasional hisses as droplets of water strike the glowing coals. On a natural terrace formation at the far end of the cavern rests a wooden throne.

This is the Zombie Master's abode. It once held furnishings for his living quarters, but since his hideous transformation he has smashed and removed all but the throne in his fits of insane rage. Characters who make a successful Spot check (DC 25) notice a strange limestone formation that resembles a bull's skull behind the throne. A Search check (DC 22) locates the secret door behind the throne.

Creatures: The Zombie Master waits for the PCs upon his throne, a shadowy figure bearing a fused spinal column mounted with wicked spikes. His face is a ghastly, white-skinned visage painted to resemble a fanged skull beneath a gleaming bald pate. His eyes are completely black, with small pools of reddish color reflecting the braziers.

The Zombie Master once led the Cult of the Walking Dead and served as protector of the village of Mora. This particular Zombie Master, Tilorak, always held a darkness in his heart that turned him toward the vile arts of evil sorcery. When the koprus turned their insidious attentions to Mora, they found in Tilorak an agent ripe for domination to be turned against those he had sworn to protect. When the koprus dominated half of his cult and forced them to butcher each other, the Zombie Master's black heart erupted inside his chest and he died, transforming into an undead mockery of his prior self. No longer dominated by the koprus, the Zombie Master has spitefully joined in with their plot despite his self-loathing. It was he who plotted the death of the matriarch in a jealous fit. He does not trust the koprus and secretly plots to raise an undead force capable of destroying them after they have subjugated Mora so he can taste the fruits of true power. To this end he has attempted to amass undead servitors in areas **C15** and **C17**.

The bull-skulled formation behind the throne is in fact a skeletal minotaur that has resided here for centuries. A powerful Zombie Master of long ago created this undead guardian, and during that span of years the dripping water slowly flowed over the unmoving guardian and in time created a calcified layer over its bones. This layer of stone effectively grants the skeletal minotaur an armor bonus equal to that of full plate.

Tilorak, Zombie Master, Male Unique Undead Human Sor8: CR 8; Medium undead; HD 8d12; hp 53; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20 (+4 Dex, +4 armor, +2 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4; Grap +4; Atk/Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+1/19–20, *+1 human bane morningstar*) or +4 melee (1d6, slam); SA spells; SQ darkvision 60 ft., insane, undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 18, Con —, Int 15, Wis 9, Cha 19.

Insane (Ex): Due to his tormented undead state, the Zombie Master is slightly mad. Every round brings a 5% chance he suddenly acts irrationally. If this occurs, he spends the round taking no actions except to babble incoherently, attack targets that aren't there, or simply stare into space. While he is acting irrationally, he suffers a –2 penalty to his Armor Class and on Reflex saving throws.

Skills: Concentration +10, Craft (taxidermy) +6, Disguise +8, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (religion) +9, Move Silently +8, Sleight of Hand +8, Spellcraft +7, Swim +5.

Feats: Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Languages: Common, Draconic, Olman.

Spells Known (6/7/7/6/4; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*acid splash, detect magic, ghost sound, light, mage hand, ray of frost, read magic, touch of fatigue*; 1st—*burning hands, cause fear, color spray, mage armor, shocking grasp*; 2nd—*continual flame, ghoul touch, touch of idiocy*; 3rd—*eyes of the zombie*, slow*; 4th—*animate dead*.

*This spell is from the *Book of Vile Darkness*. It allows the caster to control a zombie and see things through its eyes; this is how he orchestrated the matriarch of Mora's murder. Since Tilorak won't cast this spell in combat, full details on this spell are not necessary to run "Torrents of Dread."

Possessions: *+1 human bane morningstar*, dagger, *ring of swimming*, tattered robes.

Minotaur Skeleton: CR 3; Large undead; HD 6d12; hp 44; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +3; Grap +11; Atk +7 melee (3d6+6/×3, *+1 battleaxe*); Full Atk +7 melee (3d6+6/×3, *+1 battleaxe*) and +2 melee (1d8+2, gore); SA; SQ damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 19, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Feats: Improved Initiative.

Possessions: *+1 greataxe*.

Tactics: The Zombie Master sends the skeletal minotaur out to engage the party in melee, allowing him to use his ranged spells with ease. If brought below 15 hit points, he attempts to flee through the secret door, hoping to lead the PCs down to the koprus, who will finish them off.

C20. Descending Tunnel

This naturally formed fissure runs through the limestone, creating a steep and twisting avenue to the caverns below. Dozens of stalactites and stalagmites provide handholds to aid in negotiating the path, but nevertheless, anyone who tries to walk down this passage must move at half normal speed. A creature who moves at full speed must make a successful Balance check (DC 14) or slip and fall; a creature that falls slides 1d4×10 feet, suffering 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per round. If a person slides far enough, they may plunge into the water in area **C21**.

C21. Sea Cave

A salty tang fills the air and churning water fills most of this room. A small shelf of land is to the south, and directly across from the entrance a pile of boulders rises from the waters to provide a treacherous-looking ramp up to another passageway, this one glowing with a strange purple radiance.

But these details are almost obscured by the scene of horror in the cave. Dozens of human corpses litter the shores of the pool and float in its surging waters. Blood stains all of the surfaces, and the waters themselves have a decidedly pink cast to them. The coppery odor mixes nauseatingly with the salt air. Each corpse has had its head and spinal column grotesquely removed, and a swath of blood trailing up the boulder pile is unmistakable.

There area total of 43 bodies here. The cave itself connects to the sea via a mile-long underwater channel that emerges in Mora's lagoon. The water in this room is 4 feet deep along the shelf around the east, west, and south walls but rapidly drops to 40 feet in the center where it connects to the sea tunnel. The water here is considered to be rough; swimmers who fail the necessary DC 15 Swim check by 5 or more are pulled underwater. A person who wades along the edge of the room can do so safely.

Development: If the Zombie Master escaped the party in his throne room, he waits here under the blood-clouded, corpse-clogged water, clinging to the boulder pile. When anyone enters the water he uses his *ring of swimming* to propel himself to attack.

Treasure: A successful Spot check (DC 12) notes a large sea chest tucked up against the wall on the shelf to the south. This has long been where the Cult of the Walking Dead has stored its treasure, most of which came from trade with mainlanders or loot from slain pirates. The koprus have no interest in their treasure and have left it undisturbed. The chest is not locked and holds 880 gp, 2,250 sp, 1,065 cp, a gold armband worth 100 gp, and an ivory statuette of a pouncing tiger worth 60 gp.

C22. Ritual Chamber (EL 8)

A slowly spiraling vortex of purple mist conceals the ceiling of this cavern, reflecting in a pool of dark water below. Stacked on rocks around the perimeter of the room are dozens of disembodied heads. Their sightless eyes have been turned to face the center of the room.

The object of focus for the heads are two hideous beings in the center of the room. They have eel-like bodies that end in three long, flexible, tails culminating in hooked barbs. Two arms extend from their humanlike chests and end in webbed claws. Fishlike heads grow directly from their trunks, with large, unblinking eyes and toothed, sphincter mouths surrounded by four tentacles. They gesticulate and sway around the pool with their arms raised toward the swirling vortex.

These are the koprus that called up the unnatural storm above the Isle of Dread. A verdigrised plate of bronze with strange writing on it lays on the ground between them. This relic, dredged up from the sea floor, is an artifact from their ancient empire and details, in Aquan, the ritual necessary to call forth a cosmic abomination from beyond time and space. The ritual is lengthy and involves the sacrifices of 50 sentient

beings at specific points. The koprus have been at it for 8 days and have nearly completed the process.

The strange vortex of mist is a physical manifestation of the ritual, and cannot be dispelled or disrupted except via powerful magic (such as *Mordenkainen's disjunction*) or by the method detailed below in Development. Any creature with the aquatic subtype within 60 feet of the vortex suffers a –4 penalty on any Will saves made to resist a kopru's *dominate person* special attack.

Creatures: The koprus can cease their ritual with no ill effect, and do so to attack the party if they notice them.

Koprus (2): CR 6; Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic); HD 8d8; hp 36 each; Init +2; Spd 5 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +8; Grap +17; Atk +10 melee (1d6+2, tail slap); Full Atk +10 melee (1d6+2, tail slap) and +8 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +8 melee (1d4+1, bite); SA improved grab (koprus have a +7 racial bonus on grapple checks; this bonus is included in the grapple check above), constrict 3d6+3, dominate person; SQ amphibious, darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +9; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 10; *Monster Manual II* 134.

Dominate Person (Su): Once per day, a kopru can produce an effect like *dominate person* (caster level 10th; Will save DC 14), except that the range is 180 ft. and the duration is 8 days.

Skills: Concentration +8, Escape Artist +11, Move Silently +6, Search +4, Swim +10.

Feats: Iron Will, Multiattack, Skill Focus (escape artist).

Development: If the koprus are slain, the unnatural storm continues to rage for 1d6 days before the magic energy is spent. The PCs can end the storm immediately by removing the bronze plate from the catacombs or by destroying it. An examination of the bronze plate by someone who can read Aquan unveils the purpose of the storm and hints at the nature of the cosmic abomination the ritual is designed to call.

Ancient Bronze Plate: Hardness 10; hp 20; Break DC 28.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs fail to stop the koprus' ritual, the storm lasts for only a few more days before they are successful in calling an unknowable menace to the Isle of Dread. The exact nature of this creature is left for you to determine, but it should be something that only epic-level characters could hope to combat.

If, on the other hand, the ancient bronze plate is destroyed or brought out of the catacombs, the magical storm quickly vanishes in a matter of minutes, leaving a battered and soaked island under blue skies and a bright sun. The ecstatic villagers above greet the PCs as heroes. If the party reveals the Zombie Master's fate to them, they realize he had become twisted and won't hold his destruction against the party. The villagers hold a great feast for the party, honoring them as saviors before turning to the difficult task of selecting a new matriarch, re-establishing contact with neighboring villages, and restoring what was lost in the storm. They also gladly provide supplies and labor to repair the *Indira*, and allow the characters to keep any items recovered from the catacombs as a reward. Captain Burkhalter likewise stands by any deals he made with the characters, and allows them to keep the chest of gold he gave them to spend on purchasing supplies to repair his ship. Perhaps he also knows a rumor about a fabled black pearl said to lie somewhere at the heart of the Isle of Dread, and might be willing to take the party in search of it.

The village of Mora can serve as a "safe harbor" from which the PCs can base future expeditions into the Isle of Dread. The villagers need a new Zombie Master, and could request the party travel through treacherous jungle paths to the Fangs of Zotzilaha, where the original Zombie Master is said to still train new protégés. This Zombie Master is a lich and may not appreciate mainlanders intruding into his traditions.

Finally there are always the koprus under the sea. A successful Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check (DC 15) reveals that the bronze plate the koprus used to create the storm was broken from some larger piece. The hideous revelations found on this fragment hint at the magnitude of what horrors could still lie in store for the Isle of Dread.

This adventure represents my lifelong love of the game. I originally wrote it 22 years ago using the first adventure hook from page 26 of the old blue-cover module The Isle of Dread. *Then, it consisted of a single sheet of folded graph paper, serving as both map and cover, and one sheet of notebook paper (front & back). I hope the rewrite has seen some improvement.*

Scaling the Adventure

"Torrents of Dread" is designed for four characters of 6th level. However, it can be modified for characters for levels 4–8. Adjust the treasures in the adventure to correspond with the challenge level.

4th- to 5th-level PCs: Reduce the levels of all classed creatures by 1 or 2; give the Zombie Master a nearly depleted *wand of animate dead* to account for the loss of his 4th-level spell. Change the elasmosaurus in area 1 to a giant crocodile. The catacombs should not be flooded, and reduce all the encounters with undead by two or three monsters each. Replace the tendriculos with a gibbering mouther, the shambling mound with a scrag troll, and the flesh golem with an umber hulk zombie. Remove one of the koprus entirely.

7th- to 8th-level PCs: Increase the levels of all classed creatures by 1 or 2. Non-classed monsters should have their Hit Dice advanced by 4 to 8. Add a giant squid to area **C21** and a pair of 4th-level barbarian bullywugs to area **C22**.

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THIRTEEN CAGES

ADVENTURE PATH PART NINE

by Chris Thomasson
Illustrations by Ramón Pérez
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Adventure Path • High-level (13–20) • Dungeon Crawl

Things are unwell in the town of Cauldron. The city, built on the inner rim of a volcano long thought to be dormant, is dying. The volcano is wakening. Its citizens have been evacuated, yet the peril remains, for terrible fiends from Carceri have been manifesting in the tortured skies above. It seems that the volcano's awakening is but a symptom of something worse infesting its fiery heart.

"Thirteen Cages" is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure designed for four 16th-level characters. The PCs should reach 17th or possibly 18th level by the adventure's conclusion. When the PCs earn enough experience to gain a higher level, allow them to advance during the course of the adventure.

This adventure is the ninth part of the Shackled City Adventure Path that began with "Life's Bazaar" (*DUNGEON* #97), "Flood Season" (*DUNGEON* #98), "Zenith

Trajectory" (*Dungeon* #102), "The Demonskar Legacy" (*Dungeon* #104), "Test of the Smoking Eye" (*Dungeon* #107), "Secret of the Soul Pillars" (*Dungeon* #109), "Lords of Oblivion" (*Dungeon* #111), and "Foundation of Flame" (*Dungeon* #113). The Shackled City Adventure Path continues in *Dungeon* #115 with "Strike on Shatterhorn," by Christopher Perkins.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Cauldron has been evacuated. Violent tremors began rocking the city several hours ago, followed by lava-spewing cracks, monsters falling from the sky, and other catastrophes. While the PCs helped organize the city's evacuation, the high-priestess of St. Cuthbert, Jenya Urikas, spent her time concentrating on locating the Cagewrights, the evil organization responsible for the terror in Cauldron.

The Cagewrights, long plotting to turn Cauldron into a gateway for the fiendish demodands of Carceri, are well into the ritual of planar binding, a ceremony that uses life energy of the Shackleborn (descendants of demodands who came to this plane hundreds of years ago) to create this gateway. The lynch-pin for this ritual is the *Tree of Shackled Souls*, an artifact created by the Thirteen (the Cagewright leaders). The tree is a hideous adamantine and mithral structure with thirteen branches built to hold thirteen soulcages. In each cage is imprisoned one of the Shackleborn. In "Foundation of Flame," events conspired to force the Cagewrights to begin the ritual earlier than they planned; without all thirteen of their ruling members present (some of their number are unable to make it to Cauldron on such short notice), the ritual took longer for them to complete than they had anticipated. Yet complete it they did. As this adventure begins, the Cagewrights and their apprentices are relaxing after completing the ritual of planar binding while the *Tree of Shackled Souls* begins to absorb the volcanic energies of the mountain and the soul energies of the thirteen Shackleborn. The PCs finally have a window of opportunity to stop the portal from opening, but that window is closing rapidly.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PCs begin the adventure on the outskirts of Cauldron after having evacuated the town. They meet with Jenya, who tells them how to reach the Cagewrights (her divinations proved moderately successful), and that they have mere hours before a terrible event is completed that endangers them all.

The characters then travel into the heart of the volcano beneath

Cauldron. They battle demodands and eight members of the Thirteen before meeting the mastermind behind the Cagewrights' plot, a sinister, malformed demodand named Dyr'ryd. After defeating him, they must deactivate or destroy the *Tree of Shackled Souls*, which could have dire consequences of its own if not handled delicately.

CHAPTER ONE: REVELATIONS AND DESCENT

Now that the PCs have evacuated Cauldron, and the townsfolk stream toward safety as they head down the mountain under the direction of the town guards and clergy, Jenya of St. Cuthbert contacts them for an urgent meeting in a hastily erected tent along the side of the road. She's dirty, exhausted, and has a nasty cut across one cheek. She quickly gets down to business.

"We know that the organization responsible for this catastrophe are the Cagewrights. They seek to turn Cauldron into the site of a permanent portal to Carceri, the home plane of their demodand masters. Their sign is called the Carcerian Eye, and as you now know, Lord Orbius Vhalantru was in league with this group."

"The tremors are the result of a ritual the Cagewrights are performing to achieve this end. It seems they have found a way to harness the latent power of the volcano to open the portal to Carceri. Judging by the fact that the volcano's activity has so far been relatively calm, as far as volcanic eruptions go, I believe that the majority of the volcano's energy is being siphoned into some sort of focus to power the final creation of the portal. I don't know how much longer the Cagewrights need, but every second wasted is a second closer to Cauldron's doom.

"Fortunately, not all is yet lost. You still have a chance to put a stop to their plans, but alas, I know not how much time you have left. My divinations have uncovered the approximate location of where the Cagewrights are performing their ritual; deep under Cauldron near the volcano's core in a magically reinforced stronghold built to withstand the volcano's activity. Alas, these same magical reinforcements prevent direct observation or divinations about it or its contents, as well as block teleportation magic. Yet you cannot let this stop you; if they complete their ritual, we can't get the citizens of Cauldron far enough away in time to avoid an unspeakable doom! I've been able to determine which of the lava tubes gives the most direct route to the proximity of their stronghold, and can supply you with the last of the church's healing stores, but beyond that, Cauldron's fate is in your hands. There should be time still for you to rest and recover from the evacuation, but don't tarry much longer. Once you embark on this quest, I doubt you'll have a chance to rest again until it's resolved, so make sure to watch your resources closely!"

Jenya hands the PCs a fully charged *wand of cure moderate wounds* and six *potions of cure serious wounds*, telling the characters that this is all that remains of the church's healing stores. She's used all of her prepared spells, unfortunately, so there's little additional assistance she can offer them.

The exact amount of time left for the PCs to defeat the Cagewrights is not static; you should use the imminent threat of the opening of the portal to spur the PCs onward. Although the dangers encountered in this adventure are significant, the greatest problem facing the PCs is the fact that they'll probably need to complete this entire adventure without stopping to rest and recover resources. As a general rule, as long as the PCs don't flee the dungeon or stop to rest, they should have enough time to stop the creation of the Carcerian portal. If they insist on retreating from the Fiery Sanctum to rest, recover resources, identify magic items, or otherwise waste time, the *Tree of Shackled Souls* completes its work and opens the portal as detailed in "Concluding the Adventure." If, on the other hand, the PCs come up with creative solutions to the problem (such as retreating to the Astral Plane or some other timeless region, where they can rest without fear of "advancing the clock"), don't punish them. After all, coming up with unexpected solutions is part of the fun of playing a high-level adventure!

DEMODANDS

Many of the monsters encountered in this adventure are demodands, cruel and powerful fiends from the prison plane of Carceri. Demodands are detailed in full on pages 42–45 of the *Fiend Folio*. If you don't have access to this book, you can substitute similar evil outsiders from the *Monster Manual* as follows. The simple substitution lists an outsider with an equal CR, although this outsider might not have the same or similar combat options as the demodand in question, and its alignment should be changed to neutral evil. The complex substitution requires a bit more work on your part, but the end result is much closer to the demodand it replaces.

Demodand	Simple Substitution	Complex Substitution
Farastu (CR 11)	Hezrou demon	Half-fiend kuo-toa Bbn7
Kelubar (CR 13)	Death slaad	Half-fiend troglodyte Rog10
Shator (CR 16)	Horned devil	Half-fiend 22-HD Large mohrg Sor6

Note that in the 3.5 rules, farastus have damage reduction 10/good and kelubars and shators have damage reduction 15/good.

CHAPTER TWO: THE FIERY SANCTUM

If the PCs decide to approach the Cagewrights' stronghold (known to them as "The Fiery Sanctum") via the lava tubes, they've got an approximately 4-mile hike through stifling, tremor-laden tunnels. Treat these treacherous, rubble-strewn tunnels as trackless mountains for determining overland movement speeds; thus, a party moving at a speed of 30 can reach area **C1** in about 90 minutes. Feel free to liven up this journey with additional hazards (perhaps some of the volcanic hazards from "Foundation of Flame" in *Dungeon* #113) or monster encounters, but remember that each encounter the PCs are forced to endure on the way to the Sanctum further erodes their resources. Jenya's description of the tunnels is reliable enough that the PCs can use *greater teleport* to get within 10 minutes of area **C1**.

However the PCs reach the Fiery Sanctum, the areas inside the fortress have many aspects in common. Ceiling height in the complex remains constant at 15 feet unless otherwise noted. The rooms and chambers are lit by numerous tiny cages (replicas of the soulcages) containing squirming, glowing fire beetle larvae; these "lanterns" provide illumination equal to torchlight.

Most doors in the Sanctum are made of stone and are unlocked. Secret doors in this dungeon are quite cleverly hidden and require a successful Search check (DC 35) to locate.

Several areas feature heavy cloth draperies woven cunningly to resemble the volcanic rock so common in the Sanctum. The cloth feels like stone even to the casual touch, but can be pushed aside for passage beyond. These draperies are used to conceal areas the Cagewrights want to keep private but easily accessible. Finding one of these curtains requires a DC 20 Search check. Parting a curtain can be made as part of a move action.

If the PCs use *find the path* to help navigate the dungeon, remember that the numerous thin stone walls that block several passageways in the complex register as blocked routes; *find the path* works around them. Unless PCs discover these walls, the shortest path to the *Tree of Shackled Souls* is neither the safest nor the most direct.

Many areas in the Fiery Sanctum include lakes or rivers of lava. Make sure you are familiar with the lava rules on page 304 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Finally, the presence of the *Tree of Shackled Souls* suppresses all teleportation magic in the Fiery Sanctum; for complete details, refer to the *Tree of Shackled Souls*.

Stone Door: 4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28, Open Lock (when locked) DC 40.

C1. THE GATE (EL 8)

A monstrous gate of black metal blocks further progress along this smooth, volcanic tunnel. Fully fifteen feet high and eight feet wide, the gate is emblazoned with the symbol you've come to know as the Carcerian Eye—the symbol of the Cagewrights. A twisted, leering visage sculpted from the same metal as the gates adorns the lintel over the door. The face seems both calm and entirely insane, if such a thing is possible, and its race or gender is indeterminate. Its glowering eyes have also been carved in the symbol of the Carcerian Eye.

This gate is made of adamantine and is both locked and trapped.

Adamantine Gate: 1 ft. thick; Hardness 20; hp 480; Open Lock DC 40 if *arcane lock* is dispelled; Break DC 50 (*arcane lock*).

Traps: The *alarm* is triggered if someone opens the gate without a proper password (Adimarchus's name, pronounced by two people, one in Abyssal and the other in Celestial, spoken within 20 feet of the gate). This password also deactivates the *disintegrate* trap for one minute. The *disintegrate* trap can target two creatures per round within range. The sickly green beams of the spell launch from the eyes of the visage over the door to strike at the two nearest creatures within 10 feet.

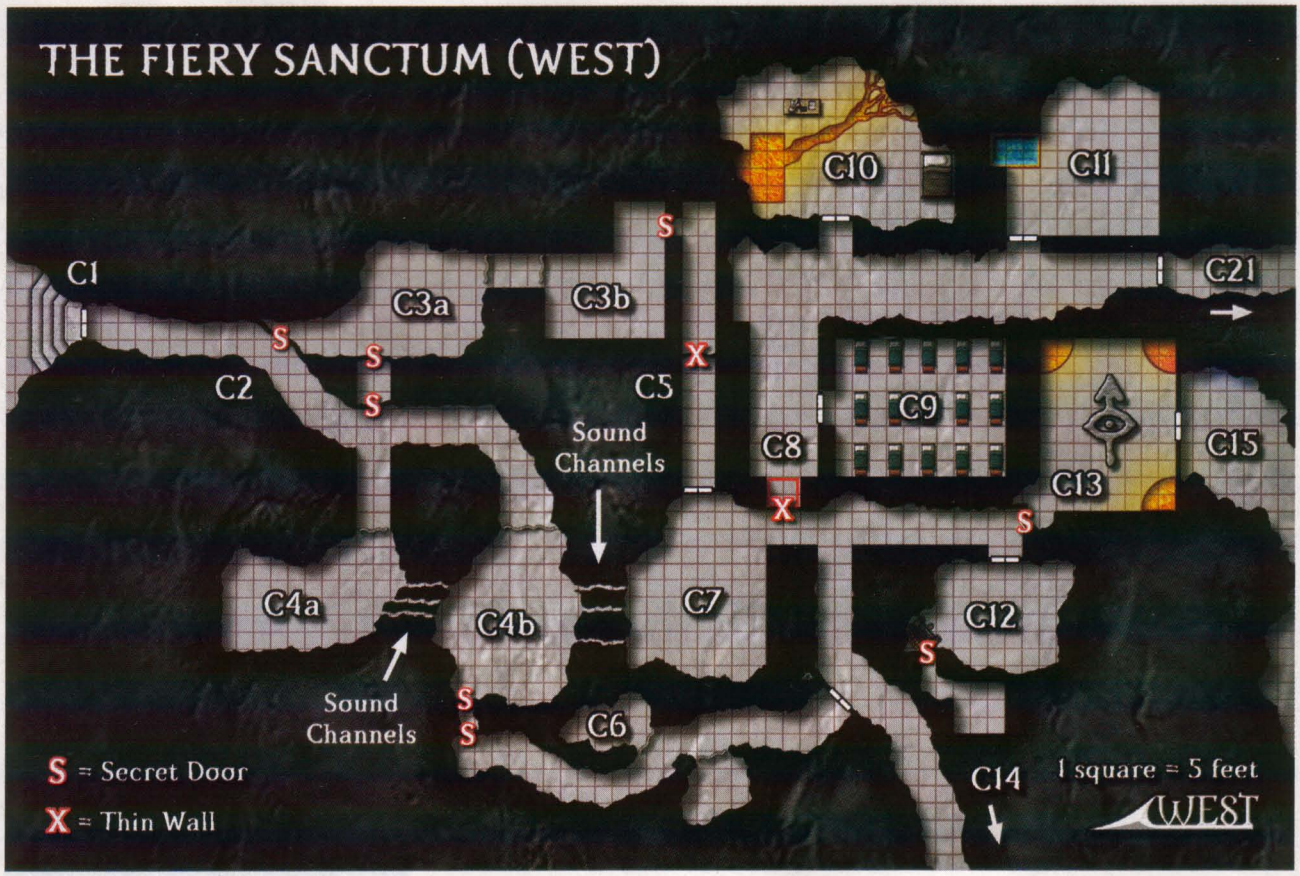
Alarm Trap: CR —; magic device; proximity trigger (20 ft.); automatic reset; spell effect (mental *alarm*, 1st-level wizard, mentally alerts specific members of Cagewrights within 1 mile); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

Disintegrate Trap: CR 8; magic device; proximity trigger (10 ft.); automatic reset; Atk +10 ranged touch (twice); spell effect (*disintegrate*, 13th-level wizard, 26d6 damage, DC 19

CAMPAIGN SEED: FATE OF THE STORMBLADES

If you're playing "Thirteen Cages" as part of the Shackled City Adventure Path, and the PCs have had run-ins with the competing adventuring group known as the Stormblades in prior adventures, this adventure is an excellent point to tie up any loose ends. You can incorporate the Stormblades in one of two ways, depending on how the PCs are handling the adventure. If you feel that the PCs are having a rough time of it and could use some help, or if the PCs have forged friendships and alliances with the Stormblades in prior adventures, they can encounter the group as allies. If the PCs are waltzing through the adventure, or made bitter enemies of the Stormblades in prior adventures, the Stormblades can serve as additional mercenary help for the Cagewrights.

If you wish to include the Stormblades, you'll need to design their stats to fit your campaign. The Stormblades consist of Annah Taskerhill (female human Ari1/Brd14), Cora Lathenmire (female human Ari1/Ftr8/Duelist 6), Todd Vanderboren (male human Ari1/Rog7/Assassin 7), and Zachary Aslaxin II (male human Ari1/Rgr7/Clr7).



Fort save for 5d6 damage); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

C2. DETOUR

The curve in the tunnel hides a secret door that leads to Gau's chambers. If the PCs take no precautions to move quietly, she automatically hears them as they pass by and prepares for combat.

C3. GAU'S CHAMBERS (EL 15)

The severe neatness and organization of this chamber stands in stark contrast to the animal stench that fills the room—a combination of sweat, manure, and wet fur makes the air thick and fetid. This appears to be some sort of dueling or training chamber. Practice dummies line the walls, along with weapon and armor racks displaying exotic equipment of all sorts. The most disturbing thing about the chamber are the spikes protruding from the walls in clusters at various heights.

These two chambers (areas **C3a** and **C3b**) are inhabited by a minotaur named Gau. If the PCs pass these rooms by, Gau repositions herself at area **C5** to ambush them later.

Gau's living quarters (area **C3b**) are sparse, furnished with little more than a few dire bear rugs and a large bed made of animal hides and bones.

Creature: Gau is the most martial—and the most feral—of the Cagewrights. Not particularly bright, she is valued for her intense loyalty to Dyr'ryd, the Cagewrights, and their plans.

Gau Kleeoch, Female Minotaur Bbn11: CR 15; Large monstrous humanoid; HD 6d8+24 plus 11d12+44; hp 181; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +17; Grp +29; Atk +27 melee (2d6+14 plus 2d6/15–20, *+2 vicious falchion*) or +24 melee (1d8+8, gore); Full Atk +27/+22/+17/+12 melee (2d6+14 plus 2d6/15–20, *+2 vicious falchion*) and +19 melee (1d8+4, gore); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA powerful charge 4d6+12, greater rage 3/day; SQ damage reduction 2/—, darkvision 60 ft., fast movement, improved uncanny dodge, natural cunning, scent, trap sense +3; AL NE; SV Fort +15, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 27, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 7, Wis 8, Cha 12.

Greater Rage (Ex): hp 232; AC 23, touch 10, flat-footed 22; Grp +32; Atk +30 melee (2d6+18 plus 2d6/15–20, *+2 vicious falchion*) or +27 melee (1d8+11, gore); Full Atk +30/+25/+20/+15 melee (2d6+18 plus 2d6/15–20, +2 vicious falchion) and +22 melee (1d8+11, gore); SV Fort +18, Will +10; Str 33, Con 24.

Skills: Intimidate +5, Listen +13, Search +5, Spot +5.

Feats: Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (falchion), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion).

Languages: Common, Giant.

Possessions: *+2 elven chain, +2 vicious falchion, gauntlets of ogre power, amulet of natural armor +1, Ring of Thirteen, winged boots, potion of cure serious wounds*, 35 pp, 20 gp.

Tactics: Gau rages and Power Attacks for at least 10 points, reducing the amount as needed in later rounds until she hits with at least three of her four attacks in a given round. She also charges, goring and using Improved Bull Rush to push opponents into the barbed spikes on the walls of her chambers. Creatures pushed into the spikes take 2d6 points of piercing damage, plus additional damage equal to Gau's current Strength modifier. In addition, creatures stuck on the nasty spikes must take a full-round action (that provokes attacks of opportunity) to yank themselves free with a successful Strength check or Escape Artist check (DC 20). A creature that does so takes an additional 2d6 points of damage from the spikes as they tear loose.

Treasure: Three of the weapons on the racks are unusual. One is an adamantine morningstar and another a silver flail. The most impressive weapon is a trophy Gau won from a paladin; a *holy avenger* emblazoned with the symbol of Pelor.

C4. FARASTU LAIRS (EL 14)

Beyond the heavy curtain is an irregular room. Odd, uncomfortable pieces of furniture lie about the chamber, including several long, narrow beds. Bizarre statuary and paintings adorn the walls and several low pedestals, and a thick, black, tarry substance covers most of the room's surfaces.

Areas **C4a** and **C4b** have similar décor. The tarry substance is exuded by the three farastus that live here.

Creatures: The farastus are likely to hear PCs passing in the hallway to the north and prepare for combat by hiding in the shadows of the room. If the PCs pass by, one farastu in the first room shouts a warning to the other group after 1 round (the sound channels between areas **C4a** and **C4b** allow farastus in either room to hear these warnings automatically), then they all move to flank the PCs in the hall.

Farastus (3 each): hp 71; *Fiend Folio* 42.

Tactics: The floor in each room is caked with farastu slime. Creatures other than farastus treat these areas as filled with dense rubble (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 60).

C5. BREAKAWAY WALL

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, this is one of several thin stone walls built to baffle *find the path* spells.

Thin Stone Wall: 1/4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 15; Break DC 15.

C6. GUARD STATION (EL 11)

Creatures: A pair of vrocks have been stationed here via *binding* by Shebeleth (second-in-command of the Cagewrights). The demons lurk in small, cramped quarters behind two heavy stone-colored curtains, which they hurl aside to attack the party's middle ranks as they pass by. Remember that, like the PCs, the vrocks' *greater teleport* spell-like abilities don't function this close to the *Tree of Shackled Souls*.

Vrocks (2): hp 115 each; *Monster Manual* 48.

C7. KELUBAR COMMAND (EL 15 OR EL 17)

This chamber reeks of a strong, acrid odor. A pale green ichor coats the floor in the chamber beyond, and strange, warped furniture can be seen among the room's contents. Against the far wall a rack has been attached to the wall, and stretched out on it are the burned and disfigured remains of at least seven humanoids, although an exact number is difficult to ascertain given the condition of the corpses.

Creatures: This chamber is the lair of a pair of kelubar demodands that answer directly to Dyr'ryd.

Kelubars (2): hp 97 each; *Fiend Folio* 44.

RING OF THIRTEEN

The Cagewright leaders all wear matching magic rings designed to protect them from detection and harm. A *Ring of Thirteen* is a *ring of protection +2* that also protects its wearer with constant *protection from good*, *nondetection*, and *endure elements*. These rings function only for evil creatures; a non-evil creature who wears a ring of thirteen gains a negative level for as long as the ring is worn. This negative level never actually results in actual level loss.

Strong abjuration; CL 15th; Forge Ring, *protection from good*, *nondetection*, *endure elements*, creator must be evil; Price 54,000 gp.

Tactics: If the kelubars are warned of the PCs' approach, they turn *invisible* and wait for the characters to investigate this chamber before attacking. If the PCs show no inclination to enter the kelubars' lair, they wait until the characters leave the area before gathering any nearby allies to stalk and ambush the PCs.

If combat breaks out here and Gau is lurking to the north of area **C5**, she breaks through the wall to come to the kelubars' aid. The Flamewarders in area **C8** quickly warn Ti'irok Coalfire in area **C10** and then marshal in the corridor outside that area in preparation for battle.

C8. PASSAGE OF FIRE (EL 17)

The floor, walls, and ceiling are polished to a mirror finish in this stiflingly hot hall, the light of dozens of cages of glowing grubs reflected a hundredfold. The western wall has been carved in a series of terrifying scenes. Fiends of all shapes and sizes force creatures of an even wider variety into burning servitude. Lording over them all, however, is a horrifying menace. Its misshapen face seems to face two directions, implying that nothing escapes its fierce, maniacal gaze.

Characters who stride boldly into the area just north of the thin wall that closes off this hallway stumble into a particularly devastating Trap. In addition, several creatures lie in wait to ambush anyone who approaches.

Creatures: Areas **C8–C10** have been given over to the Flamewarders, a mercenary band composed of extraplanar creatures known as haraknin: hell hounds that can assume humanoid form. The Flamewarders are led by a fire giant named Ti'irok Coalfire.

Two Flamewarders stand guard here at all times, listening for sounds of intruders beyond the breakaway wall. If they hear sounds of battle from area **C7**, one of them alerts their commander Ti'irok in area **C10**, while the other retrieves the other two Flamekin stationed in area **C9**. The haraknin mercenaries are under orders not to attack beyond the breakaway wall but to form ranks to repel invaders from here.

Flamewarders, Male and Female Haraknin Ftr5/Rog5 (4): Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, fire, lawful shapechanger); HD 4d8+12 plus 5d10+15 plus 5d6+15; hp 108; Init +7; Spd 40 ft.; AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 25; Base Atk +12; Grp +17; Atk +19 melee (1d12+10/×3, *+1 greataxe*) or +16 ranged (1d8+5/×3, masterwork composite longbow [+5 Str]); Full Atk +19/+14/+9 melee (1d12+10/×3, *+1 greataxe*) or +16/+11/+6 ranged (1d8+5/×3, masterwork composite longbow [+5 Str]); SA breath weapon, sneak attack +3d6; SQ darkvision 60 ft., evasion, fire subtype, scent, trap sense +1, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +13, Ref +13, Will +8; Str 20, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Breath Weapon (Su): Cone of fire, 30 feet, every 2d4 rounds, damage 1d4+1, Reflex DC 20 half. A haraknin's breath weapon ignites flammable materials within the cone. It can use its breath weapon while biting.

Skills: Hide +18, Jump +17, Listen +13, Move Silently +18, Spot +13, Survival +7 (+15 when tracking by scent), Tumble +11.

Feats: Acrobatic, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe).

Languages: Common, Infernal.

Possessions: *+2 chain shirt, +1 adamantine greataxe,* masterwork composite longbow (+5 Str bonus), 30 arrows, *ring of protection +1, potion of blur, potion of bull's strength, 2 potions of cure serious wounds, potion of protection from energy (cold), oil of greater magic weapon +3,* red-lacquered gold armband set with an emerald (1,000 gp), 25 pp, 100 gp.

Tactics: The haraknin fight for the admiration of and devotion to their fire giant commander, not out of any loyalty to the Cagewrights. They attempt to block the PCs from moving out of the trapped area behind the break-away wall as long as possible. If the battle goes poorly, the Flamewarders make a fighting

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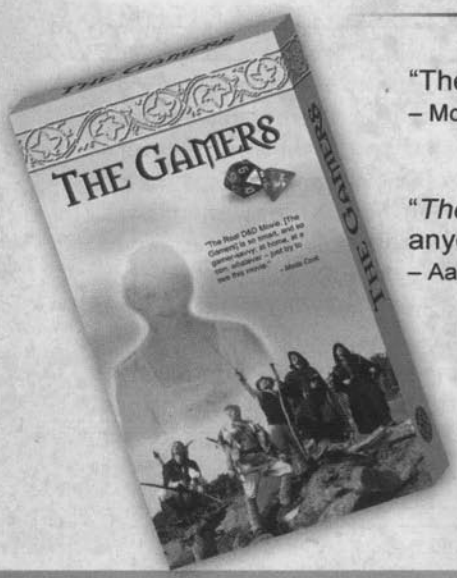

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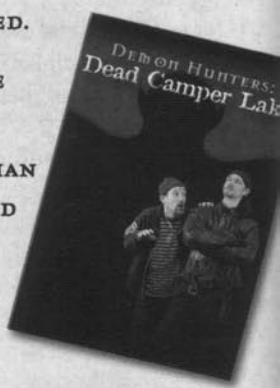

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retreat toward area **C10**, where their commander joins the fray.

Trap: The 10-foot area right behind the break-away wall is dreadfully trapped. When anyone steps on the area without speaking Dyr'ryd's name aloud, the monstrous, two-faced creature in the wall carving (a representation of Dyr'ryd himself) launches beams of negative energy at the intruders. As long as a PC stands on one of the four squares behind the wall, the wall continues to fire two beams each round at targets in the area (determined randomly from available targets).

***Energy Drain* Trap**: CR 10; magic device; location trigger (10-foot area behind break-away wall); automatic reset; multiple traps (two simultaneous *energy drain* traps); Atk +10 ranged touch and +10 ranged touch; spell effect (*energy drain*, 17th-level wizard, 2d4 negative levels); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

Development: If the PCs met and killed Aszithef Flamewarder in "Lords of Oblivion" (*DUNGEON* #111) and one of them now wields her greatsword, the flamewarders recognize the weapon and become enraged, taking special pains to focus their attacks on that character.

C9. FLAMEWARDER BARRACKS

Long cots fill this chamber in orderly rows. The cots are immaculately made and look quite uncomfortable. Closed footlockers rest at the end of each bed. The walls bear only a single decoration—a tapestry depicting a black silhouette on a field of red of a bearded face outlined in flames and howling in fury. The air smells strongly of brimstone.

Creatures: These are the barracks for the haraknin Flamewarders. Most are stationed elsewhere, but a pair of them rest here now unless they have been summoned to help protect area **C8**.

Flamewarders (2): hp 108; see area **C8**.

Treasure: The footlockers contain spare uniforms, whetstones and armor-cleaning supplies, and bits of food. A DC 30 Search check turns up a few items of interest, including a total of 347 gp, 445 sp, a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, and a *wand of knock* (10 charges).

C10. TI'IROK'S CHAMBERS (EL 19)

The walls here are rough and natural, although the floor is polished smooth. A massive iron bed fills half the wall to the east, and a stream of glowing lava runs slowly though the center of the room to what appears to be a large sunken pool built into the west wall. A tapestry made of a dark, heavy metal adorns the wall across from the door, displaying a silhouette of a bearded face outlined in flames and howling in fury, all on a field of red. A large iron bookshelf sits on the floor below, carrying several oversized books. Next to that and facing the door is a massive iron table cluttered with metal sheets and a dragon's skull.

The leader of the Flamewarders dwells here. He is Ti'irok Coalfire, a fire giant who assembled his band of haraknin on a trip to the Elemental Plane of Fire many years ago. He bought the entire lot of them from an efreeti slaver and had them transported back to his clan's lands. After a failed coup against his clan leader, Ti'irok found himself out of favor. Consequently, he left his clan behind, haraknin in tow, to seek his fortune as leader of a mercenary band.

After a few successful campaigns, Ti'irok's remarkable band of Flamewarders drew the attention of the Cagewrights. He has been serving the Cagewrights loyally—thanks in no small part to the massive sums of gold they pay him—for the past six years. Ti'irok still holds the contract of purchase for the haraknin, but he has never resorted to keeping the lawful creatures in line with it—he has had no need. Through their battles together, he has always tried to treat them well, if strictly, and the harkanin have thrived under Ti'irok's leadership.

Ti'irok's lieutenant and cohort was a female haraknin named Aszithef. He assigned her to the beholder Orbius Vhalantru to act as an intermediary between the creature and the Cagewrights (and also to keep an eye on the eye tyrant), but she has not reported back in several days, likely due to the PCs' interference in "Lords of Oblivion."

Creatures: Ti'irok is likely aware of the PCs' approach due the sounds of battle from area **C8**, and has marshaled two of his haraknin to help prepare his reception for the PCs.

Ti'irok Coalfire, Male Fire Giant Ftr8: CR 18; Large giant (fire); HD 15d8+90 plus 8d10+48; hp 249; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 30, touch 11, flat-footed 30; Base Atk +19; Grp +34; Atk +32 melee (3d6+20 plus 1d6 fire/17–20, *Blackfire*) or +29 melee (1d4+11, slam) or +19 ranged (2d6+11 plus 2d6 fire, rock); Full Atk +32/+27/+22/+17 melee (3d6+20 plus 1d6 fire/17–20, *Blackfire*) or +29 melee (1d4+11, 2 slams) or +18/+13/+8/+3 ranged (2d6+11 plus 2d6 fire, rock); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA rock throwing; SQ immunity to fire, low-light vision, rock catching, vulnerability to cold; AL LE; SV Fort +21, Ref +7, Will +11; Str 32, Dex 11, Con 22, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +20, Craft +19, Intimidate +17, Jump +20, Spot +19.

Feats: Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Leadership, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword).

Languages: Common, Giant, Infernal.

Possessions: *+3 moderate fortification full plate, Blackfire (+2 flaming burst unholy greatsword), gloves of Dexterity +2, helm of telepathy, ring of protection +2*, 2 emeralds (1,000 gp each), 500 gp.

Flamewarders (2): hp 108; see area **C8**.

Tactics: Ti'irok uses his *helm of telepathy* to contact Dyr'ryd as soon as he's aware of the PCs. He and his Flamewarders ready actions to attack the first target they see. Otherwise, they draw weapons as soon as they become aware of the characters; Ti'irok engages in melee and the Flamewarders move to the edges of the room to fire their bows.

Ti'irok begins the encounter near his bed. As soon as the opportunity presents itself, he attempts to use his Improved Bull Rush feat to push someone into the lava pool. A PC who falls in takes 20d6 points of fire damage from total immersion in the 12-foot-deep pool.

Development: The metal sheets on the table serve Ti'irok as paper; he uses special metal inks to write on them. Two sheets might be of interest to the PCs. The first contains a few notes about the ritual of planar junction; namely, that once it is completed the *Tree of Shackled Souls* still requires several hours to build up enough energy to open the portal. During this vulnerable time the tree must be defended at all costs.

The second is a list of tasks that includes the following:

1. See to Decrihni. The constant organ playing has got to stop.
2. Speak to the wyrm about the collar. Ensure it is still cared for.
3. Speak to Dyr'ryd once the portal is open to inquire about the dispensation land.
4. Establish plan with Nulin and Thearynn about a plan to round up remaining townsfolk as workers for the lords from beyond.
5. Polish Blackfire. (This last entry is crossed out.)

C11. TESTING CHAMBER (EL 0 OR 17)

This chamber is some sort of martial training facility. Combat dummies in various states of repair line the walls, weapon racks containing padded practice weapons rest in racks on other walls, and curls of mist rise from a low pool in a nook across from the door, heated by trickles of lava running down the walls into fissures around its edges.

The lava running down the walls heats the stone around the pool, creating a hot bath in which weary haraknin can relax. The pool is far too hot for creatures lacking some resistance to fire, however, at an uncomfortable 150 degrees. Creatures exposed to the water take 2d6 points of fire damage, or 8d6 per round if fully immersed.

Creatures: Four Flamewarders train here. The door to this chamber is normally kept open, so chances are that they'll hear the sound of combat in nearby areas. If they do, they quickly grab their weapons and join the battle.

Flamewarders (2): hp 108; see area **C8**.

C12. DECRIHNI BAIUL'S CHAMBER (EL 14)

The first object that draws your eye is a massive pipe organ in a nook along the west wall. Black iron pipes run up from the large organ, running along the contours of the natural ceiling. The keys are made of what appear to be the fingerbones of various humanoid creatures, and the organ bench is the skeleton of a dwarf, bent into a squatting position with hands raised to support the musician. A gilded bed sits against the opposite wall next to a carved stone wardrobe that looks to be part of the rock wall of the room. A small shrine sits against the south wall, and the scent of burning incense fills the air.

Shebeleth Regidin has graciously allowed his protégé, Decrihni Baiul, to assume chambers separate from his own, something most of the other members of the Cagewrights' inner circle have refused to do. Decrihni is of a martial bent, and spends nearly as much time in combat drills with the Flamewarders and Gau as he does aiding Shebeleth in his rituals and arcane researches.

Creatures: Decrihni stands about 5 feet tall, and has a thick, barrel-shaped body and arms and legs like the trunks of healthy trees. His eyes protrude from beneath a coarse brow and his bulbous nose is shot through with burst blood vessels. His shaggy black hair is chopped short, and he wears a scraggly black beard.

Decrihni Baiul, Male Human Ftr5/Clr9: CR 14; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d10+5 plus 9d8+9; hp 99; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +11; Grp +15; Atk +18 melee (2d4+10/19–20, *+2 spell storing spiked chain*); Full Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (2d4+10/19–20, *+2 spell storing spiked chain*); SA rebuke/command undead, spells; SQ —; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +10; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 8.

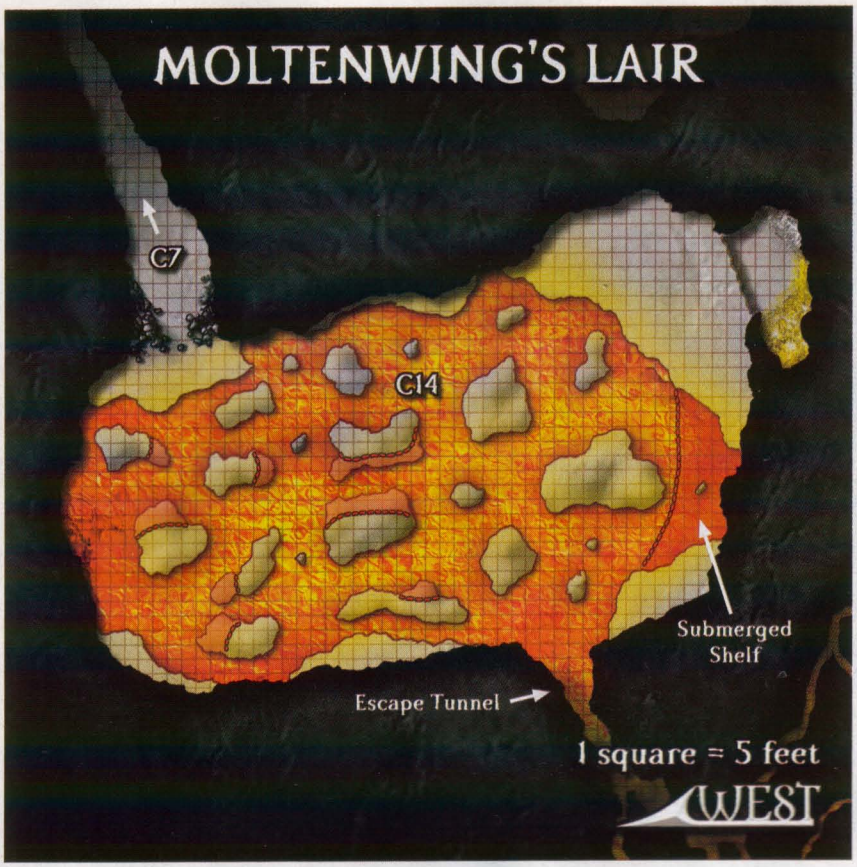
Skills: Climb +7, Concentration +10, Craft (weaponsmithing) +9, Intimidate +7, Jump +1, Knowledge (the planes) +13, Perform (keyboard instrument) +2, Spellcraft +10.

Feats: Combat Expertise, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Improved Critical (spiked chain), Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Weapon Focus (spiked chain), Weapon Specialization (spiked chain).

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/2+1/1+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic, detect poison, guidance, read magic*; 1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *detect law, divine favor, protection from good*, shield of faith*; 2nd—*bear's endurance, cure moderate wounds, darkness, hold person, shatter*, sound burst*; 3rd—*cure serious wounds, magic circle against good*, prayer, searing light, stone shape*; 4th—*cure critical wounds, divine power, unholy blight**; 5th—*dispel law**, quickened *divine favor*.

*Domain spell. *Domains*: Chaos (cast chaos spells at +1 caster level), Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level).

Possessions: *+3 full plate, +2 spell storing spiked chain*, cold iron spiked chain, *gauntlets of ogre power, ring of protection +2, potion of invisibility*, scroll of *righteous might*, 23 gp.



When the PCs arrive in this chamber, they find Decrihni madly playing his pipe organ. Decrihni isn't very good, but he makes up for his lack of skill with sheer exuberance.

Tactics: Decrihni casts *divine power* and a quickened *divine favor* on himself as soon he notices the PCs. He then wades into melee gleefully, his eyes shining and maniacal spittle flying from his lips as he occasionally shouts prayers to the dark powers in which he believes (chief among them being Adimarchus).

Development: Decrihni's pipe organ is more than it appears. A successful Search check (DC 30) uncovers a strange set of symbols carved into an obscure corner of the pipe organ. A successful Decipher Script or Perform (keyboard instrument) check (DC 30) reveals that the symbols indicate a specific chord on the organ, which can be successfully played by anyone with at least 1 rank in Perform (keyboard instrument) or with a successful Dexterity check (DC 25). Doing so causes the keyboard to swing open and reveal a narrow, twisting passage into the stone behind. This leads to a private shrine of Decrihni's dedicated to the demon prince Adimarchus. The walls are painted with a mix of blood and other, more foul substances in mad, haphazard swirls. The room reeks, and a shrine in its center holds a stone statue featuring the Carcerian Eye. Adimarchus's name is also painted on nearly every available surface in Abyssal, Infernal, and Undercommon, along with terribly crafted poems praising the "dark lord of madness" and all his works.

A character with the Sign of the Smoking Eye template (detailed in *Dungeon* #107) feels a strange reaction to this room; good characters become overwhelmed with sorrow and pity while evil characters are filled with exultation and joy. A neutral character feels nothing, but all characters with this template immediately understand that the shrine can be used to draw upon the energies of the Abyssal layer of Occipitus to use *wish* once as a spell-like ability. This *wish* must be made in this room and does not cost experience points to cast; once used, the connection between Occipitus and this altar is burned away, forever gone.

C13. MEETING ADJOURNED

Every surface of this large, rectangular room has been polished to a mirror sheen. Quarter-circle pools of lava in three of the room's four corners augment the light provided by numerous grub cages. Massive double doors carved with the Carcerian Eye exit the room to the east, but the chamber is dominated by an immense, carved stone table, also in the shape of the Carcerian Eye. Thirteen chairs surround the table, the one at the head larger than the others.

This is the meeting chamber of the Thirteen. They gather here when great events must be discussed, or when the group must be informed as a whole of one of Dyr'ryd's decisions.

C14. PYROCLASTIC ACTIVITY (EL 17)

This massive cavern is lit by a large lake of lava. Islands of volcanic stone protrude from the molten rock, but gaps of five to fifteen feet separate them. To the east, the cavern wall curves gently to a larger ledge. At the rear of that far ledge hangs a magnificent tapestry, black with thread of gold strung through it. Through a gap between the tapestry and the wall, you can see a dark chamber extending even further beyond.

Long before the Cagewrights discovered the volcano, long before even the founders of Cauldron built the first structure in the bowl of the dormant volcano above, Garathrynakh the pyroclastic dragon (known also as Moltenwing) dwelt here. Moltenwing spent several decades after first coming to the Material Plane ravaging now ancient towns and civilizations, but eventually grew weary and retreated into the depths of this volcano to sleep. Above, his

legend faded, and eventually settlers reached the mountains and built the first buildings of the city.

When the Cagewrights first found the crude series of chambers near the volcano's heart, they had no idea they were trespassing in the outer warren of caverns around Moltenwing's lair. Their intrusion awoke the dragon, who responded with fury. The Cagewrights were not interested in a fight, however, and managed to secure the dragon's reluctant friendship with large amounts of gold, magic, and flattery. A bargain was struck between the two parties. The Cagewrights would send regular payments of treasure to Moltenwing during their stay in the caverns. In return, the dragon would not bother them. Later, when the *Tree of Shackled Souls* was completed, the Cagewrights also asked the dragon to guard a magic collar that could be used to shut the *Tree* down in the event of an emergency (see the *Tree of Shackled Souls*).

Creature: Moltenwing spends most of his time snoozing on a ledge submerged 7 feet below the lava level on the far eastern portion of the cavern (see the map for details). When the PCs enter the room, Moltenwing lounges there and can make a Listen check to detect their approach. Moltenwing has a –18 penalty on this check due to the distance between him and the entrance to his lair. If he fails to hear them, he can continue to make Listen checks each round, and eventually detects them with his blindsense when they approach within 60 feet.

When the PCs arrive, he does nothing. Only the tip of his snout is exposed to the surface (DC 45 Spot check reveals), resting on the edge of the ledge in the southeastern corner of the chamber. He waits until they come within 60 feet or step onto the large ledge to the north of his position, then bursts from the lava, splattering everything within 30 feet with magma. Creatures in the area take 2d6 points of fire damage, and 2d6 more for the next 2 rounds from the hot lava; a successful Reflex save (DC 15) negates this damage.

Moltenwing knows by their entrance that the PCs are not of the Cagewrights. They always contact him with a *sending* before approaching. However, he is curious about even more humanoids daring to enter his lair, and is supremely confident in his ability to handle them should the need arise. After potentially showering them with lava, he steps up onto the large ledge and bellows at them to identify themselves.

Moltenwing has given his word to the Cagewrights, but more importantly, they have shown him proper respect and showered him with wealth. He doesn't want the cash flow to stop, so he acts to protect the Cagewrights from any perceived threats. While he talks, he tries to keep the PCs in a line respective to his position (to use his breath weapon), and warns them not to approach closer than halfway across the room. The dragon isn't a skilled

THE FIERY SANCTUM (EAST)
C11
C21
C22
C8
C25
S
S
C13
C20
C24a
C24b
S
C16
C19
S
C23
C15
C27
X
C26b
S
S
S
C17
C18
C26a
S = Secret Door
X = Thin Wall
1 square = 5 feet
WEST
C14

diplomat, and clever PCs might be able to wrangle some interesting bits of information from him before he decides to attack.

Moltenwing's initial attitude is hostile, but he's willing to talk to the PCs long enough for them to make Diplomacy or Intimidate checks to adjust his attitude. If the PCs can adjust his attitude to friendly (DC 35) he admits that he has indeed formed an alliance with the Cagewrights. He'll also, at this point, proudly announce that he guards something of incredible import for them, since they're obviously too weak and puny to guard their own treasure. Only if the PCs make him helpful (DC 50) does he volunteer the names and brief descriptions of the Thirteen if asked. If the PCs can successfully Bluff him into believing they're Cagewright allies and his attitude is helpful, he'll hand over the important thing he's guarding (the *dispersal collar*) if they ask for it. Otherwise, Moltenwing grows tired of the discussion in a few minutes and if the PCs haven't left his lair by then, he attacks. Of course, if he ever suspects that they're here to harm the Cagewrights, he attacks immediately.

Moltenwing (Garathrynakh), Male Mature Adult Pyroclastic Dragon: CR 16; Huge dragon (extraplanar); HD 25d12+150; hp 312; Init +0; Spd 60 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor), climb 40 ft., burrow 45 ft.; AC 35, touch 11, flat-footed 35; Base Atk +25; Grp +44; Atk +36 melee (2d8+13, bite); Full Atk +36 melee (2d8+13, bite), +34 melee (2d6+8, 2 claws), +34 melee (1d8+8, 2 wings), +36 melee (2d6+18, tail slap), or +36 melee (2d8+18, crush); SA breath weapon, frightful presence (Will DC 25, 210 ft.), spell-like abilities; SQ blindsense 60 ft., damage resistance 15/magic, fast healing 3, immunity to fire, sleep, paralysis, and sonic, keen senses, spell resistance 26; AL NE; SV Fort +23, Ref +17, Will +20; Str 33, Dex 10, Con 23, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 16; *Draconomicon* 183.

Breath Weapon (Su): 50-ft. cone of superheated ash and sonic force, 14d6 half fire and half sonic, Reflex DC 28 half; or 100-ft. disintegrating line, death, Fort DC 28 negates.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—*produce flame, sound burst* (DC 15); 1/day—*pyrotechnics* (DC 15), *shatter* (DC 15), *shout* (DC 17), *wall of fire* (DC 17). Caster level 7th.

Skills: Appraise +31, Bluff +31, Concentration +34, Diplomacy +5, Intimidate +31, Knowledge (the planes) +31, Listen +31, Search +31, Sense Motive +31, Spot +31.

Feats: Cleave, Fast Healing*, Flyby Attack, Great Cleave, Hover, Improved Bull Rush, Multiattack, Power Attack, Wingover.

*This epic feat gives Moltenwing fast healing 3.

Possessions: *Amulet of mighty fists +2, cloak of resistance +3* (worn rolled up as a collar), *ring of protection +3, ring of evasion.*

Tactics: When Moltenwing attacks, he tries to catch at least two PCs in the area of his disintegrating line breath weapon. He then attempts to bull rush a PC into the lava. If successful, he dives in after them, grapples them in the magma to keep them from escaping, and eats their charred remains without resurfacing. Otherwise, he tries to hover over the PCs to gain a +1 bonus on attacks and takes full attack actions, using his breath weapons when he can.

The dotted lines on the map represent passages Moltenwing has carved out beneath the islands so he can crawl through the magma without having to squeeze. When moving through the magma, Moltenwing uses his burrow speed.

Treasure: Behind the massive tapestry is Moltenwing's hoard chamber. He has amassed an impressive amount of treasure worth a total of roughly 34,000 gp: 2,411 gp, 339 pp, 32 assorted gems worth a total of 2,762 gp, a silver hand mirror (50 gp), an oaken hairbrush inlaid with jade (60 gp), a green dragon-skin rug (500 gp), a pair of platinum bracers (600 gp each), a silver candelabra (700 gp), a silk tapestry depicting the constellations, with diamonds set as stars (1,200 gp), a *potion of lesser restoration*, an arcane scroll of *charm person, knock*, and *ray of enfeeblement*, a clay *golembane scarab*, a *cloak of Charisma +4*, a *wand of bull's strength* (24 charges), and a *dispersal collar*. This last item is the device the Cagewrights built as a safety measure against catastrophe should the *Tree of Shackled Souls* fail; see the *Tree of Shackled Souls* for more details.

C15. ROUGH PASSAGE

If the PCs don't take care to remain silent while traversing this passageway, the demodands lurking in area **C16** likely hear them and react accordingly.

C16. DEMODAND TORTURE CHAMBER (EL 15)

The walls of this chamber look like melted wax, and the air smells acrid and foul. Various implements of torture also occupy the chamber, including a bed of wicked, barbed spikes, some sort of stretching device resembling a rack, and hooks on the wall that hold corpses in various states of decay. A large chest sits in an alcove to the south.

Creatures: Two farastus and a kelubar inhabit this chamber. They have had no task or purpose for months, and their boredom led them to gather a few torture devices and turn this chamber into a room more reminiscent of those they occupied on Carceri. Despite their orders not to risk discovery by meddling with surface dwellers, the kelubar managed to sneak to the surface a few times to capture beggars to torture.

Kelubar: hp 97; *Fiend Folio* 44.

Farastus (2): hp 71 each; *Fiend Folio* 42.

Treasure: The demodands have amassed a fair amount of treasure from their victims. The large chest contains 1,455 gp, a divine scroll of *flame strike* (10th level), a divine scroll of *mass cure light wounds*, a *+1 dagger*, a *+2 breastplate*, and a *periapt of health*.

C17. FREIJA DOORGAN'S CHAMBERS (EL 16)

A large canopied bed rests against the far wall, the covers pulled tight and neatly tucked. Workbenches and shelves line the other walls, covered with magical apparatus, books and papers. A circle has been carved into the floor. Arcane glyphs and runes have been scribed and intertwined around and through the circle, and it glows with a soft, silvery light.

Creature: Freija Doorgan is the item creation expert for the Cagewrights. She crafted most of her own gear and much of that carried by her fellows in the organization. She also aids Shebeleth in research matters. Her library isn't here as she hasn't been engaging in any research, but enough portions of it are that an arcanist interested in conjuring magic or item creation could find reference materials of interest.

Freija is a rail-thin woman who wears her hair pulled back tightly from her face. She wears austere robes that cover her from neck to wrist to ankle, always of the same blood red color. She is fastidiously clean, and her chambers are the only ones in the complex that look scrubbed. This cleanliness is actually a sign of her obsessive compulsive behavior. She prepares for every battle by casting the same preparatory spells in the same order. If her robe is mussed in a fight she becomes enraged and focuses on the character responsible with grim implacability until that person is dead, all the while screaming, "You got me dirty! How dare you, you filthy, filthy maggot" and similar imprecations.

Freija Doorgan, Female Human Conjurer 15: CR 15; Medium humanoid (human); HD 15d4+48; hp 95; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +7; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d4–1, masterwork dagger) or +10 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d4–1, masterwork dagger) or +10 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SA spells; SQ empathic link, scry on familiar, share spells, weasel familiar named Hirt; AL NE; SV Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +11; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 22, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Skills: Concentration +21, Decipher Script +16, Knowledge (arcana) + 24, Knowledge (architecture & engineering) +14, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (history) +24, Knowledge (the planes) +18, Spellcraft +26.

Feats: Augment Summoning, Craft Staff, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Forge Ring, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (conjuration), Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (conjuration), Spell Penetration, Toughness.

Wizard Spells Prepared (5/7/7/6/6/6/5/3/2; save DC 16 + spell level, conjuration 18 + spell level): 0—*acid splash, dancing lights, open/close, ray of frost, touch of fatigue*; 1st—*grease*, magic missile* (3), *obscuring mist*, ray of enfeeblement, shield*; 2nd—*glitterdust*, Melf's acid arrow*, scorching ray, spider climb, web** (2), *whispering wind*; 3rd—*dispel magic, displacement, fireball* (2), *protection from energy, stinking cloud**; 4th—*charm monster, confusion, dimension door*, Evard's black tentacles*, ice storm, wall of fire*; 5th—*cloudkill** (2), *feeblemind, telekinesis, teleport, wall of stone**; 6th—*acid fog*, chain lightning, disintegrate, greater dispel magic, summon monster VI**; 7th—*forcecage*, prismatic spray, summon monster VII**; 8th—*horrid wilting, summon monster VIII**.

*Conjuration spells. Prohibited schools: divination, illusion.

Possessions: Masterwork dagger, masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts, *belt of health +2* (as *amulet of health +2*), *headband of intellect +4, bracers of armor +4, cloak of resistance +2, periapt of proof against poison, ring of counterspells* (*dispel magic*), *Ring of Thirteen, wand of enervation* (25 charges), *wand of magic missile* (9th level, 50 charges), scroll of *fly*, scroll of *dimension door*, scroll of *summon monster VIII*, spellbooks (contains all spells prepared plus all other conjuration spells of levels 1–8 in the *Player's Handbook*), 5 gems (100 gp each), 100 pp.

Tactics: If warned of the PCs, Freija casts *displacement* and *shield*. She prefers to fight from behind a screen of summoned monsters. As soon as she hears the PCs outside, she casts *summon monster VIII* to summon a vrock, followed by her other *summon monster* spells in descending order. She uses her *wand of enervation* to maximum effect, targeting spellcasters first if she can.

Treasure: Equipment from the workbenches includes expensive reagents used to craft magic items worth 3,000 gp, and the gear from the area can be used to put together two full alchemist's labs if it's relocated.

Development: In a secret drawer of one of Freija's workbenches (Search DC 30, Open Lock DC 30) is a collection of notes written in Abyssal that details the creation of the *dispersal collar*, a device Freija was ordered to create should the need ever arise to shut down the *Tree of Shackled Souls* in the event of an emergency. The notes mention that the collar has been secured with "that dark wyrm of Gehenna."

C18. FIRESTREAM (EL 17)

A stream of lava running along the far wall of the tunnel empties into a pool of molten rock that fills the majority of the eastern section of this cavern. A rough stone table covered with scraps of charred, nearly raw meat, along with several stone stools stands in the room's center. A water barrel rests near the entrance.

The pool of lava is only 3 feet deep; creatures can wade through it as if it were dense rubble but suffer damage from the lava each round

Creatures: Four Flamewarders guard this chamber. They can serve as reinforcements for areas **C20**

or **C27** as necessary. Two of the Flamewarders are located on the north side of the pool, with the second pair on the southern shelf with their bows at the ready. If combat begins, they make sure to call out warnings to the nearby denizens.

Flamewarders (4): hp 108; see area **C8**.

C19. FALLING FLOOR (EL 9)

A tall stone door stands in the northern wall of this cavern, with passages leading to the east and south. A single rill of lava flows out of the far wall through this chamber, then follows the east wall of the passage around a bend to the south.

Trap: The floor is actually an illusion that blends seamlessly into the bordering stone floor and walls. The illusion conceals a network of artificially deepened lava streams that criss-cross the true floor in an intricate pattern. The one visible stream is part of the illusion, although it mirrors one of the many streams on the actual floor. Characters who don't see through the illusion or fly over it step in one of the 1-foot-deep streams of lava, at which point they can make Will saves to recognize the illusion for what it is.

Illusory Floor and Lava Trap: CR 9; magic device; proximity trigger (entire room); automatic reset; *illusory wall* on floor conceals network of 4-foot-deep, 3-foot-wide lava streams (8d6 fire damage from partial immersion, 4d6 fire damage on following round, 2d6 fire damage on third round); multiple targets (all creatures touching the floor in the room); DC 16 Will disbelief (if interacted with); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29.

C20. GATHERING CHAMBER (EL 16 OR EL 19)

This large chamber looks partly natural and partly sculpted. The ceiling is high here, reaching to roughly 30 feet. Two thick streams of lava course slowly along the floor. One emerges from the north wall and the other from the south. The two lava rivers merge in the center of the room and continue to flow through a channel to the south. Sturdy stone benches line the walls where the lava doesn't flow, sculpted out of the volcanic rock. The Carcerian Eye has been carved into the south wall. The sculptor was either a master or had the aid of magic, for the disturbing image seems to follow movement in the room.

This central gathering chamber is used by the Thirteen when they must confer with their mercenaries, apprentices, or other servants. It is also a central rallying point used in the case of intruders.

Creatures: If the PCs have already encountered Ti'irok in area **C10** and dealt with the Flamewarders there, two Flamewarders guard this chamber along with a glabrezu named Ja'akrand called here by Shebeleth (who uses his *gate* scroll to do so). The powerful demon was initially unhappy about being called from the Abyss until it realized it had been called to the Material Plane. It now intends to destroy as many souls from this plane as it can during its stay here, and its pincers snap and twitch in anticipation of mortals to rend.

If the PCs have not yet dealt with Ti'irok but raised the alarm, the fire giant has been notified to coordinate a defense in this room. The Cagewrights connected these passages in such a way as to channel intruders to this point, and Ti'irok has drilled his Flamewarders in the defense of this chamber. If this is the case, Shebeleth has not used his scroll of *gate* to call the glabrezu, relying on the resilient fire giant and his band to repel the intruders. Ti'irok brings the four Flamewarders from areas **C10–C11** to help defend the chamber, leaving the other four in area **C8** to defend that area of the Fiery Sanctum.

Flamewarders (2 or 4): hp 108; see area **C8**.

Ja'akrand, Male Glabrezu: hp 174; *Monster Manual* 43.

Ti'irok Coalfire: hp 249; see area **C10**.

Tactics: The Flamewarders tumble to flank and attack single targets until they take him or her down. The glabrezu is a more cunning foe. It hangs back and uses its spell-like abilities to great effect. It activates *mirrior image* in the first round, then uses *power word stun* on an arcane spellcaster or rogue it can see (it's trying to pick a target with lower hit points). Flamewarders make sure to attack stunned targets to maximize their sneak attacks. Ja'akrand then uses *reverse gravity* on heavily armored characters, sending them to the 30-foot ceiling for 3d6 points of falling damage. It engages in melee only when that is the best option left available.

Ti'irok uses tactics as described in area **C10**, bull rushing likely targets into the lava stream, where they take 4d6 points of fire damage (followed by 2d6 the following round and 1d6 the round thereafter).

C21. STALAGMITE GARDEN (EL 14)

A cluster of large stalagmites rises toward the roof of this fifteen-foot-high cavern. Each has been sculpted into humanoid shapes of exquisite detail. In addition, parts of the figures appear to be made of some clear material, allowing you to see that the stalagmites seem to be filled with lava. The molten rock glows from within the partially translucent figures, casting strange shadowy shapes on the walls. The display of statuary would be quite beautiful if not for the gruesome scenes depicted. Each figure displays a visage of cruel savagery, snarls in fury, or grimaces in pain. Several display cruel deformities or vicious wounds, the light from the magma within causing them to glow with terrible fire.

This garden is kept by Grehlia Cairnis, apprentice Cagewright to Nulin Wiejeron. A sculptor by hobby,

she uses spells to augment her trained ability to create these tributes to Nerull.

Grehlia joined the Cagewrights a year ago. She was recruited by Nulin as a hireling first, then brought on board once she completed several missions for the Cagewrights. Some of the other members of the Thirteen objected when she was initiated, claiming that she was too advanced in skill and experience to be pliable enough to accept her role within the organization, but her enthusiasm and skill eventually allayed their doubts.

Grehlia is open about the worship of her deity, and keeps a small shrine in the chambers she shares with Nulin, spending at least an hour every day in prayer to her dark deity. She suspects that the other divine casting members of the Cagewrights are uncomfortable with her faith, but she doesn't know why. She asked Decrinhi once about his god, but he only sneered and stalked away. Shebeleth secretly believes that Grehlia's faith in Nerull may prove to be a liability when she eventually learns the truth of the organization's devotion to Adimarchus. He has Decrinhi keep an eye on her; Embryl does the same when she is around. Grehlia knows she is being watched and resents the suspicion. Thus, despite their similarities in combat style or faith, she finds herself mostly avoiding the company of the other clerics.

Creature: Grehlia is small and stout. She has mousy brown hair cropped just above her ears. She typically keeps it slicked back with some greasy substance to keep it out of her eyes. Her eyes are the same brown as her hair, and she tends to breathe through her mouth unless she's on a job. In such cases, her focus sharpens noticeably, and she moves as silently and gracefully as any to have practiced her trade. She speaks with a noticeable lisp, but any who have pointed her impediment out to her have usually ended up screaming with agony as the dark power of Nerull coursed through their bodies.

Grehlia Cairnis, Female Human Rog2/Clr11 (Nerull)/Assassin 1: CR 14; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d6+3 plus 11d8+11; hp 84; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +9; Grp +12; Atk +15 melee (1d6+5 plus poison, *+2 spiked gauntlets*) or +12 ranged (1d6+3/×3, *+1 composite shortbow* [+2 Str]); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d6+5 plus poison, *+2 spiked gauntlets*) or +12/+7 ranged (1d6+3/×3, *+1 composite shortbow* [+2 Str]); SA death attack (DC 13), rebuke undead, sneak attack +2d6, spells; SQ evasion, poison use, trapfinding; AL NE; SV Fort +10, Ref +12, Will +13; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 8.

Skills: Concentration +15, Craft (sculpting) +9, Disguise +4, Forgery +5, Hide +15, Jump +6, Listen +9, Move Silently +9, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +1, Spot +9, Tumble +12.

Feats: Ability Focus (death attack), Acrobatic, Empower Spell, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Focus (necromancy), Weapon Focus (spiked gauntlets).

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/6+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/2+1/1+1; save DC 14 + spell level, necromancy 16 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic* (2), *light* (2); 1st—*bane, command, cure light wounds* (2), *divine favor* (2), *protection from good**; 2nd—*aid, align weapon, cure moderate wounds* (2), *hold person, invisibility**; 3rd—*cure serious wounds* (2), *daylight, dispel magic, nondetection**, *prayer*; 4th—*air walk, cure critical wounds, divine power, poison, unholy blight**; 5th—*dispel good**, *flame strike, slay living*; 6th—*harm, mislead**.

*Domain spell. *Domains*: Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level), Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, Hide are class skills).

Possessions: *+3 chain shirt, +2 light steel shield, +2 spiked gauntlets, +1 composite shortbow* (+2 Str bonus), *belt of ogre power* (as *gauntlets of ogre power*), *periapt of wisdom +2, cloak of resistance +2, ring of protection +2*, scroll of *bear's endurance*, scroll of *harm*, 4 doses giant wasp poison (DC 18; 1d6 Dex/1d6 Dex), 10 pp, 34 gp.

Tactics: Grehlia favors *inflict wounds* spells used in conjunction with attacks from her spiked gauntlets. If she knows the PCs are only a few rounds away from reaching this area, she casts the following spells in this order: *aid, protection from good, air walk, invisibility, prayer,* and *divine power*, followed finally by *harm* (she holds the charge for the first round of combat). She then hides within the maze of her statuary garden. She attempts to stay hidden until the PCs enter, then sneaks up on a lightly armored character to strike with her spiked gauntlets and *harm*. She then attempts to withdraw to the statue garden, using *flame strike* and *slay living* at range before being forced into melee.

Development: Sounds of battle here are probably heard by Thearynn in area **C22**, as well as Nulin in area **C27** and Shebeleth in area **C24a**.

C22. THEARYNN LOUVEL'S CHAMBERS (EL 17)

This chamber is almost barren of furnishings. A narrow cot rests against the far wall next to a workbench containing a few tools and a simple wooden chest. A perch that looks like it might act as a rest for a large bird sits in one corner; a number of black, foul-looking droppings litter the floor beneath it. An iron brazier heats the cold space.

Creature: Thearynn Louvel is the most paranoid of the Cagewrights. He lives isolated from the other members of the Thirteen, nurturing his mistrust and his own form of madness. Thin and pale, with wide, darting brown eyes, he keeps his head shaved except for a small forelock in the middle of his brow that he toys with when nervous, making it greasy and flat. He favors summoning spells because he can avoid combat by making other creatures fight for him. One of the only Cagewrights not to take a human apprentice, he thought that selecting an outsider would ensure that he wouldn't be betrayed. As all three of his previ-

ous apprentices (humans all) tried to assassinate him and assume his position as one of the Thirteen, his paranoia is understandable. He wears frayed brown robes to avoid showing signs of obvious wealth, and only ventures from his chambers on the summons of Dyr'ryd or to visit Moltenwing, with whom he is completely fascinated.

Xarthyx the quasit serves Thearynn as an apprentice. Bored with his life in the Abyss, the quasit was intrigued when he was called up by Thearynn and offered an apprenticeship. Xarthyx has made incredibly rapid leaps in his spellcasting, but his raw power and inexperience leads him to make mistakes, a trait Thearynn hasn't had the inclination to correct. The quasit is a dark green color, with a bloated, rotund belly and a tendency to twitch his tail and salivate tremendously when excited.

Thearynn Louvel, Male Human Conjurer 15: CR 15; Medium humanoid (human); HD 15d4+45; hp 68; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +7; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d6, masterwork quarterstaff) or +8 ranged touch (spell); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d6, masterwork quarterstaff) or +8 ranged touch (spell); SA spells; SQ empathic link, share spells, weasel familiar; AL NE; SV Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 20, Wis 8, Cha 13.

Skills: Concentration +21, Decipher Script +14, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +18, Knowledge (history) +18, Knowledge (the planes) +22, Listen +1, Spellcraft +25, Spot +1.

Feats: Alertness (as long as familiar is in arm's reach), Augment Summoning, Craft Rod, Craft Wand, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (conjuration), Spell Focus (illusion).

Wizard Spells Prepared (5/7/6/6/6/4/3/2; save DC 15 + spell level, 16 + spell level for conjuration or illusion spells): 0—*acid splash** (2), *detect magic, open/close, prestidigitation*; 1st—*charm person, expeditious retreat, grease**, *mage armor**, *shield* (2), *ventriloquism*; 2nd—*darkvision, Melf's acid arrow** (2), *mirror image, see invisibility, Tasha's hideous laughter*; 3rd—*dispel magic, displacement, fly, protection from energy, slow, stinking cloud**; 4th—*charm monster, dimension door**, *Evard's black tentacles** (2), *greater invisibility, phantasmal killer*; 5th—*baleful polymorph, cloudkill**, *dominate monster, feeblemind, telekinesis, wall of stone**; 6th—*acid fog, greater dispel magic, summon monster VI, true seeing*; 7th—*phase door**, *reverse gravity*, silent *summon monster VI*; 8th—*incendiary cloud, summon monster VIII*.

*Conjuration spells, which are this character's specialty. Prohibited schools: evocation and necromancy.

Possessions: Masterwork quarterstaff, *Amulet of health +2, headband of intellect +2, bead of force, boots of levitation*, iridescent spindle *ioun stone, ring of protection +2, Ring of Thirteen, greater extend metamagic rod*, scroll of *summon monster V*, scroll of *summon monster VII, wand of web* (25 charges), *wand of summon swarm* (10 charges), ointment for *true seeing* (250 gp), spellbooks (contain all prepared spells plus all other conjuration spells from the *Player's Handbook* of levels 1–9).

Xarthyx, Quasit Sorcerer 11: CR 12; Tiny outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, evil); HD 3d8+3 plus 11d4+11; hp 57; Init +5; Spd 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect); AC 20, touch 17, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +8; Grp –1; Atk +15 melee (1d3–1 plus poison, claw) or +15 ranged touch (by spell); Full Atk +15 melee (1d3–1 plus poison, 2 claws) and +10 melee (1d4–1, bite) or +15 ranged touch (by spell); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA poison (DC 14, 1d4 Dex/2d4 Dex), spells, spell-like abilities; SQ alternate form, bat familiar, damage reduction 5/cold iron or good, darkvision 60 ft., empathic link, fast healing 2, immunity to poison, resistance to fire 10, share spells; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +11, Will +10; Str 8, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 19.

Skills: Bluff +21, Concentration +12, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +4 (+6 to act in character), Hide +19, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (the planes) +7, Listen +9, Move Silently +11, Spellcraft +19 (+21 to decipher spells on scrolls), Spot +6, Use Magic Device +14 (+16 involving scrolls).

Feats: Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device), Spell Focus (evocation), Weapon Finesse.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*detect good, detect magic, invisibility* (self only); 1/day—*cause fear* (DC 15, 30-foot radius). Caster level 6th.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/7/7/4; save DC 14 + spell level, 15 + spell level for evocation spells): 0—*acid splash, daze, detect magic, flare, open close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, touch of fatigue*; 1st—*burning hands, detect secret doors, expeditious retreat, magic missile, shield*; 2nd—*bear's endurance, scorching ray, Melf's acid arrow, touch of idiocy, web*; 3rd—*displacement, fireball, ray of exhaustion, stinking cloud*; 4th—*confusion, enervation, ice storm*; 5th—*cone of cold, teleport*.

Possessions: *Cloak of charisma +2, ring of chameleon power*, 2 scrolls of *arcane lock*, 2 divine scrolls of *cure moderate wounds*, scroll of *phase door, wand of searing light* (10 charges, 6th level), *wand of unholy blight* (10 charges, 8th level), carved ruby amulet (symbol of Adimarchus), 23 pp, 13 gp.

Tactics: Thearynn has developed a plan to deal with those out to get him, and he has drilled with Xarthyx extensively in this deadly plan. When Thearynn becomes aware of intruders, he casts *true seeing* and uses his *boots of levitation* to ascend into a hole sculpted into the ceiling. The hole is actually not visible to those on the ground, due to a permanent *illusory wall* spell concealing the entrance.

Not even the rest of the Thirteen are aware of this hidey hole. Thearynn can see through the illusion due to his *true seeing* spell, and he has a small ledge in the hole on which he can lie down and observe the entire room. He casts his defensive spells when he hears battle in area **C21**. He also casts *ventriloquism* on himself.

Xarthyx's job, meanwhile, is to turn invisible and wait. When the PCs enter the room, Thearynn casts *open/close* to close the door behind them. The invisible quasit uses a scroll of *arcane lock* to seal it (the PCs automatically hear the quasit read the scroll, but he doesn't turn visible). The imp then flies to a corner of the room near the ceiling and begins launching a barrage of deadly spells—mostly evocations—at the intruders.

Thearynn meanwhile casts *acid fog*, filling the room with the deadly mist, followed by *Evard's black tentacles* to try to keep them grounded. If the PCs look as though they're capable of handling the fog, he casts his *summon monster* spells, using his *greater extend metamagic rod* to keep the summoned creatures around longer. By virtue of his *ventriloquism* spell, he's able to throw his voice even when casting spells, making it seem as though the caster is everywhere at once. If Thearynn takes more than half his hit points in damage, he casts *phase door* to escape to area **C25**. If this happens, the PCs encounter Theraynn again in the fight with Shebeleth, where he makes his last stand.

Treasure: Thearynn keeps his spellbooks in his secret niche in the ceiling, along with some rambling notes, mostly written in Abyssal, that are the obvious product of a dysfunctional mind. Among the bits and pieces of trivia, though, is a passage that reads, "I know the Fish is out for me. I know the Fish wants my power. I know the Fish is a traitor. A liar, backstabber—I know. The sneaky Fish. Set the traps on the south wall. I know he's tunneling—tunneling to me. Sneaky Fish. Rotten Fish."

C23. ARDETH WEBB'S CHAMBER (EL 18)

A pool of glowing lava nearly 30 feet across fills a sunken region to the south of this large cavern. The ceiling is 40 feet high, and the room appears to be some sort of training facility. Paper screens line most of the walls, painted in various impressionistic patterns and designs, and reed mats cover the floor. Weapon racks hold a variety of exotic weapons. A pair of practice dummies hangs from the high ceiling along the east wall, and a low, wooden cot sits against the west. To the south stands a large armoire.

This chamber is the home of Ardeth Webb, one of the Thirteen, but another member of the group is found here as well: Nulin "Fish" Wiejeron, the spymaster of the Thirteen. He spends a great deal of time here training with Ardeth, and he has long planned to make his stand in this room given its unusual features.

This chamber has been enhanced with several permanent *invisibility* spells, each of which fills a five-foot-square as indicated on the map. Anyone who stands on them and says aloud, "Blessings of Adimarchus" in any language as a free action becomes invisible, as the *invisibility* spell (caster level 10th).

Creatures: Ardeth is an enigma, even to her comrades. All they know is that she has been a part of the Thirteen longer than any other member except Dyr'ryd. She was born on the Material Plane over 150 years ago, the spawn of a servant of a dark monastery that trafficked with the spawn of the Nine Hells of Baator. Her mother died in childbirth and Ardeth was brought up by the monks. At the age of 20 she left the monastery, and by age 40 she had been recruited by Dyr'ryd. Money and material gain have never driven Ardeth—only power motivates her. It was during her long time among the Cagewrights that she became a tattooed monk (this prestige class is detailed in full on pages 82–84 of *Complete Warrior*,

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but all relevant details are presented in her stat block below).

Ardeth keeps her own counsel most of the time. She seems content to pursue the machinations devised by Embryl and Shebeleth, secure in the knowledge that they bring the Cagewrights' goals ever closer to fruition. She knows that her silence unnerves the others, and that brings her a certain amount of perverse joy.

Ardeth stands about 5 and a half feet tall, and weighs about 130 pounds. Fit and strong, she spends most of her days conversing (and planning) with Dyr'ryd or honing her skills with Nulin. She keeps her head shaved to display a twisted tattoo of a scorpion across her scalp. Her eyes are dark and her face ageless, adding to the mystique that surrounds her. She typically wears simple white robes.

Ardeth's most striking features are her tattoos. The most prominent is the scorpion tattoo on her shaved head. The body of the creature begins on her forehead, its pincers sweeping down on either side of her eyes. Its hindquarters end just above her neck, its tail coiling around her neck to end just above the joining of her collarbones. She bears a crane tattoo on her back, a tiger on her right arm, a wasp on her left, and a phoenix on her chest. The most disturbing aspect of her tattoos is that they are twisted and malformed, possibly from the effects of her fiendish blood. Two small horns jut from Ardeth's brow, and the faint smell of brimstone follows her wherever she goes.

Nulin "Fish" Wiejeron earned his nickname years ago when he worked as a waterfront tavern bouncer in a distant city. He became something of a local legend due to his ruthlessness and cold-blooded willingness to engage in violence. If someone insulted him or threatened him with violence, they turned up dead within a day, their bodies picked clean. He learned his skills as an assassin when he felt the money he earned in the tavern couldn't keep him comfortable—and when the job became boring as fewer and fewer patrons were willing to risk his ire by misbehaving. Shebeleth and the other Cagewrights recognized his talents, chief among them his discretion. Eventually, he proved himself enough times that he was offered a position among the Thirteen. Never one to pass up an opportunity for more power and influence, Nulin readily accepted.

Nondescript in the extreme, Nulin is quiet, and seems content to mostly go along with the plans the other Cagewrights cook up. He wears dark clothing as a rule, but owns a massive wardrobe, with clothing suitable for the throne room as well as beggar's rags. A master of disguise, the balding, ordinary-looking assassin's many outfits find frequent use. He has no chambers of his own here, spending most of his time on the surface until recently. He now spends his time here with Ardeth, training, or with his apprentice in area **C21**.

Ardeth Webb, Female Tiefling Monk 6/Tattooed Monk 10: CR 17; Medium outsider (native); HD 16d8+32; hp 119; Init +5; Spd 80 ft.; AC 28, touch 24, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +11; Grp +21; Atk +20 melee (2d8+8, unarmed strike); Full Atk +19/+19/+14/+9 melee (2d8+8, unarmed strike); SA *darkness* 1/day (CL 16th), ki strike (magic); SQ darkvision 60 ft., evasion, immunity to disease, immunity to poison, immunity to aging, purity of body, slow fall 30 ft., still mind, spell resistance 25, tattoos (crane, phoenix, scorpion, tiger, wasp); AL LE; SV Fort +14, Ref +17, Will +16; Str 22, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 8.

Tattoos (Su or Sp): Ardeth's tattoos are infused with magical energy. Unless the effect of a tattoo is continuous, activating one is a move action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Tattoos that activate as a spell-like ability function at caster level 10.

Crane: Immune to nonmagical disease, poison, and aging penalties.

Phoenix: Gains constant SR 25.

Scorpion: Force an opponent attacking her to use his lowest ability score modifier instead of his Strength or Dexterity modifier when making his attack roll. Ardeth must activate this tattoo on her opponent's turn, before that success or failure of the attack is determined. She must be aware of the attack and not flat-footed to use this ability; 5/day.

Tiger: While fighting unarmed, gain +1 bonus on attack rolls and deal +1d6 damage per hit; 10 rounds; 5/day.

Wasp: *Haste* on self; 10 rounds, 5/day.

Skills: Balance +18, Escape Artist +17, Hide +26, Jump +39, Knowledge (religion) +12, Listen +22, Move Silently +24, Spot +23, Tumble +26, Use Rope +7 (+9 with bindings).

Feats: Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance, Improved Disarm, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike).

Possessions: *Belt of giant strength +4, boots of health +2* (as amulet of health +2), *gloves of dexterity +4, headband of wisdom +2* (as *periapt of wisdom +2*), *amulet of mighty fists +2, bracers of armor +4, cloak of arachnida, ring of minor fire resistance, Ring of Thirteen, 3 potions of cure serious wounds.*

Nulin "Fish" Wiejeron, Male Human Rog5/Ftr2/Asn8: CR 15; Medium humanoid (human); HD 13d6+12 plus 2d10+2; hp 82; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 25, touch 16, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +11; Grp +13; Atk +19 melee (1d6+5/15–20, *+3 rapier*) or +15 ranged (1d6+2/×3, composite shortbow [+2 Str]); Full Atk +19/+14/+9 melee (1d6+5/15–20, *+3 rapier*) or +15/+10/+5 ranged (1d6+2/×3, composite shortbow [+2 Str]); SA death attack (DC 20), poison use, sneak attack +7d6, spells; SQ evasion, hide in plain sight, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +1, trapfinding; AL NE; SV Fort +9 (+13 against poison), Ref +14,

Will +5; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Balance +6, Bluff +13, Climb +5, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +19 (+21 acting), Escape Artist +11, Gather Information +13, Hide +26, Intimidate +11, Jump +11, Listen +12, Move Silently +26, Search +11, Spot +12, Tumble +18.

Feats: Dodge, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (rapier), Iron Will, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier).

Assassin Spells Known (4/4/3/1; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st—*detect poison, feather fall, jump, true strike*; 2nd—*alter self, invisibility, spider climb, undetectable alignment*; 3rd—*deep slumber, deeper darkness, magic circle against good, misdirection*; 4th—*dimension door, greater invisibility, locate creature.*

Possessions: *+3 shadow silent chain shirt, +1 mithral buckler, +3 rapier,* composite shortbow (+2 Str bonus), 30 arrows, *amulet of health +2, gloves of Dexterity +2, boots of striding and springing, goggles of night, hat of disguise, Ring of Thirteen, 2 potions of cure serious wounds, potion of haste, wand of displacement* (10 charges), 2 gems (500 gp each), 3 gems (100 gp each).

Tactics: Fish and Ardeth use the invisibility squares in this room to great effect. The two pursue similar tactics, disappearing one round, then moving and attacking in the next. If a PC seems able to *see invisibility*, they focus their attacks on that character almost exclusively. When they activate a square, they whisper the command word in Abyssal. A successful Listen check (DC 20, modified for distance) allows a character to hear this command word.

Treasure: The weapon racks contain two each of every monk weapon (see page 40 of the *Player's Handbook*), each is masterwork quality. In addition, the following magic monk weapons are kept here: a *+3 adamantine dragon bane nunchaku* and a *+2 ghost touch kama*. A secret compartment beneath Ardeth's cot (Search DC 30 to find) contains an arcane scroll of *dimension door* and *dimensional anchor*, a *staff of frost* (23 charges), and a *druid's vestment*. Finally, the armoire contains Fish's expansive wardrobe, which is worth a total of 2,400 gp.

Development: If Ardeth is defeated before Fish, the PCs are faced with an interesting conundrum. The assassin, who is pragmatic before all things, remains invisible but breaks off combat to address the PCs. He offers information in exchange for his life. After extracting a promise of safety from the most lawful-looking PC, Fish (still invisible) quickly answers any questions the PCs may have. He can tell them the names and basic powers of all the other Cagewrights, the purpose of the ritual of planar binding, and of the purpose of the *Tree of Shackled Souls*. He only reveals that the *dispersal collar* can safely deactivate the tree if his initial attitude of hostile can be made helpful with a successful Diplomacy or Intimidate check (DC 50). Finally, if asked who it is the Cagewrights serve, he takes a deep breath and admits they serve a powerful demon prince imprisoned on Carceri, and that this demon prince is named Adimarchus.

C24. SHEBELETH REGIDIN'S CHAMBERS (EL 19 OR 20)

The western half of this chamber is decorated lavishly as a bedchamber. Fine rugs cover the stone floors, and tapestries the walls. An ornate desk sits against one wall, emblazoned across the front with the Carcerian Eye. A wardrobe built of ebony sits near a large, four-poster bed. The room narrows to the east, then opens into a second chamber. This one is much more spartan. The floor is bare, but has been carved once more with the symbol of the Cagewrights. An altar and font stand near the far wall, both covered in a strange glowing script.

The strange altar is dedicated to Adimarchus, and the spidery runes on it sing his praises in Abyssal. The font nearby contains 20 doses of unholy water. As with the secret shrine of Adimarchus in area **C12**, characters who have the Sign of the Smoking Eye template feel a strange bond to the altar if they approach within ten feet of it. In this area, such a character gains a +4 insight bonus on attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks as he is able to draw upon the power of Occipitus via this altar.

The area to the east (area **C24b**) is Shebeleth's personal library. The tomes in this chamber cover a wide range of subjects, from the outer planes to local history.

Creatures: Of the Thirteen, few wield as much power as Shebeleth. Only Dyr'ryd and Embryl Aloustinai are more powerful. The other members secretly fear this intimidating priest. Shebeleth was the primary builder of the *Tree of Shackled Souls*. A keeper of lost mysteries and arcane knowledge, he owns a tremendous collection of books worth quite a bit of money (see Treasure, below). Shebeleth is also a fair musician, a trait his apprentice has attempted to emulate. Strains of his eerie compositions on the violin fill the Cagewrights' complex at all hours, sending chills down everyone's spines.

Shebeleth is tall and gaunt. He rarely eats, taking his meals in his chambers while he works. He wears nondescript dark robes that cover him from his neck to his feet, with long, voluminous sleeves that conceal even his hands. In battle, however, he throws his sleeves back to reveal spindly arms covered in gruesome scars. The rest of the Thirteen speculate that similar scars actually cover his entire body, signifying his commitment to whatever force grants him his clerical powers. Shebeleth keeps his head shaved and

sports no facial hair. His only adornments are a dark, diamond-shaped crystal embedded in the middle of his forehead and his holy symbol, a dark iron amulet in the shape of the Carcerian Eye that hangs from a thick iron chain.

Shebeleth is always attended by a shator demodand minion named Keeriv. The demodand secretly believes Shebeleth should be serving it, as is only proper, but it has greater respect and fear for Dyr'ryd.

Shebeleth Regidin, Male Human Clr10/Loremaster 7: CR 17; Medium humanoid (human); HD 10d8+40 plus 7d4+28; hp 120; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +10; Grp +9; Atk +10 melee (1d8, *+1 morningstar*) or +11 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8, *+1 morningstar*) or +11 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SA rebuke undead, spells; SQ dodge trick, greater lore, lore +9, newfound arcana, secrets of inner strength, secret knowledge of avoidance; AL NE; SV Fort +15, Ref +12, Will +22; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 22, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +14, Concentration +24, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +12 (+14 acting), Gather Information +11, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (history) +15, Knowledge (the planes) +16, Perform (string instruments) +11, Spellcraft +15.

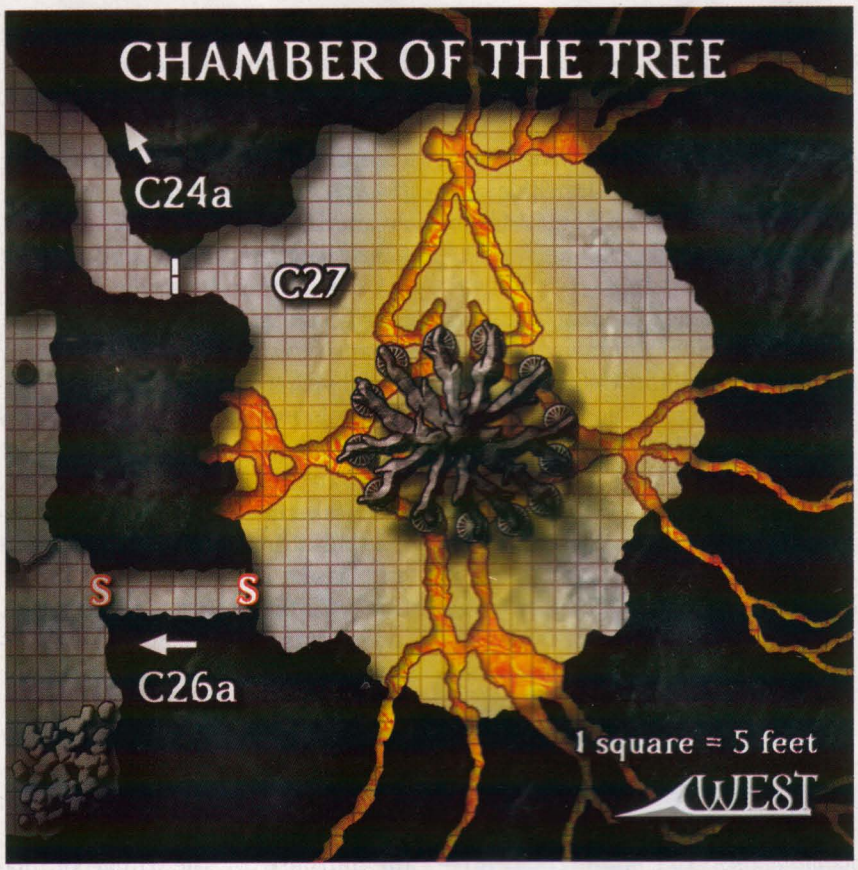
Feats: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge—the planes), Widen Spell.

Languages: Common, Abyssal, Demodand, Infernal.

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/7+1/7+1/6+1/6+1/5+1/5+1/3+1/2+1/1+1; save DC 16 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic* (2), *light, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*bane, cure light wounds* (2), *detect good, doom* (2), *protection from good*, shield of faith*; 2nd—*align weapon, cure moderate wounds* (2), *death knell, invisibility*, resist energy, status, undetectable alignment*; 3rd—*bestow curse, cure serious wounds, dispel magic, magic circle against good, nondetection*, searing light* (2); 4th—*confusion*, cure critical wounds* (2), *death ward, greater magic weapon, sending* (2); 5th—*break enchantment, dispel good*, flame strike* (2), empowered *searing light, spell resistance*; 6th—*blade barrier* (2), *greater dispel magic, harm* (2), *mislead**; 7th—*blasphemy*, destruction* (2), empowered *flame strike*; 8th—empowered *blade barrier*, widened *flame strike, polymorph any object**; 9th—*summon monster IX, time stop**.

*Domain spell. *Domains*: Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level), Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, Hide are class skills).

Possessions: *+3 mithral breastplate, +1 small wooden shield, +1 morningstar*, masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts, *belt of health +4* (as *amulet of health +2*), *gloves of dexterity +2, periapt of wisdom +4, cloak of resistance +2, dusty rose prism ioun stone, ring of minor fire resistance, Ring of Thirteen, metamagic rod of empower, oil of magic vestment (+4), potion of fly*, scroll of *mass cure moderate wounds*, scroll of *dimensional anchor*, scroll of *widened flame strike*, scroll of *invisibility purge*, scroll of *plane shift*, holy symbol, three gems (100 pp each).



Keeriv, Shator: hp 127; *Fiend Folio* 45.

Tactics: Shebeleth has been aware of the PCs for some time now, but remained unconcerned. This fearlessness is his own brand of madness—unless magically compelled, he feels no emotions whatsoever. When the PCs arrive, he turns to them and attempts to stall them with conversation as long as possible to give the *Tree of Shackled Souls* time to complete its job. If combat does erupt, he reacts by casting *time stop*, then *spell resistance, magic circle against good*, and *protection from good* on himself if there's time, followed by *summon monster IX* to summon a hezrou.

Keeriv casts *mage armor, bull's strength, blink,* and *true strike* if he realizes the PCs are near. While Shebeleth talks, he lurks in the shadows of the chapel, trying to appear threatening until combat erupts.

Development: Combat here is likely heard in area **C27** by Dyr'ryd (Listen DC 35).

Treasure: The shelves in area **C24b** hold numerous tomes that address matters arcane and planar. Also on the shelves are an arcane scroll of *analyze dweomer,* an arcane scroll of *phase door,* and an arcane scroll of *fire shield.* Construction plans for the *Tree of Shackled Souls* can be found here as well. Written in Abyssal, these plans outline in detail the Cagewrights' goals. They do not mention the *dispersal collar* (those plans are found in area **C17**), but they do mention a failsafe backup plan for shutting down the tree should something go awry, and that Freija has been tasked with implementing this plan.

C25. FOOD AND SUPPLIES

This large cavern is used to store food, water, and other supplies. Several barrels of wine, ale, and fresh water rest against the north wall, and three heavily laden shelves hold several hundred pounds of food.

Treasure: A successful DC 25 Search check reveals a small cask behind a sack of dried beef on one of the shelves that holds six potion vials, each labeled clearly in Abyssal as a potion of *cure moderate wounds.*

C26. DYR'RYD'S CHAMBER (EL 15)

The walls of this large chamber are sickly dark red. In the corner of the chamber lays a pile of cushions nearly 30 feet across, stacked nearly 6 feet high. The cushions, like the floor, are covered in a pale, sickly slime. A desk behind a bend in the chamber is sized for someone overly large—at least 10 feet tall.

This is Dyr'ryd's personal chamber. The leader of the Thirteen and pre-eminent Cagewright is currently spending his time in area **C27** with the *Tree of Shackled Souls.*

Creatures: Three fellow demodands await Dyr'ryd's pleasure here. They won't leave this room to investigate the sounds of battle elsewhere, instead remaining here to guard Dyr'ryd's treasury and the secret door.

Kelubar: hp 97; *Fiend Folio* 44.

Farastu (2): hp 71 each; *Fiend Folio* 42.

Treasure: Area **C26b** serves Dyr'ryd as a treasury. Three urns hold a total of 2,333 gp and 639 pp. Also among the loose treasure are two *potions of cure moderate wounds* and a *potion of bull's strength.* There are signs that more treasure was at one point stored here, but the majority of it was used to finance the construction of the *Tree of Shackled Souls.*

C27. TREE OF SHACKLED SOULS (EL 20)

This massive elliptical chamber glows with a hellish light from lava bubbling through shaped channels that form a familiar pattern in the floor. These rivers of lava form the sign of the Carcerian Eye, and from the eye's "pupil" grows a horrendous sight.

A large tree of metal erupts from the lava there. Thirteen branches sprout from a central trunk several feet across, twisting menacingly around the chamber to increase the diameter of the area occupied by the tree to nearly 60 feet. The branches are covered in wicked barbs, but each branch tapers to end in a hook. From each hook hangs a cage, and within each cage you see the slumped form of a humanoid figure. These must be the Shackleborn—individuals cursed by fate to be the keys to unlocking the gate to Carceri.

The terrible metal tree is the *Tree of Shackled Souls.* The PCs may recognize some of the Shackleborn in the thirteen soulcages, including Terrem and Zenith Splintershield. Full details on this artifact and how the PCs can deactivate it are detailed below.

Creature: Dyr'ryd waits here for the PCs, the last line of defense for the *Tree of Shackled Souls.* The massive demodand is actually two entities inhabiting the same, monstrous body. He looks like a normal shator with the exception of a second, loathsome face and a small, stunted arm and leg that protrudes from the side of his head. This second face resembles Dyr'ryd's, but is not identical. The demodand's main face is actually the personality known as Dyr, while the second, cancerous face goes by the name Ryd. When Dyr'ryd speaks, both voices rasp just out of sync. Utterly insane, Dyr'ryd often converses with itself, especially when it's excited. One face compliments the other on a particularly devastating attack, while if a stratagem fails, one chastises the other, screeching imprecations for a few seconds while the vestigial leg twitches and the arm clenches its tiny fist. Of the two faces, Ryd is far more foul tempered, and more likely to attempt Intimidate checks. Dyr is smoother and more prone to using Bluff or Diplomacy than resorting to threats.

Dyr'ryd, Advanced Shator Demodand: CR 19; Large outsider (evil, extraplanar); HD 19d8+76; hp 180; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., fly 70 ft. (poor); AC 28, touch 15, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +19; Grp +29; Atk +28 melee (3d6+13/×3, *Mindbite*) or +20 ranged touch (paralysis, slime spit); Full Atk +28/+23/+18/+13 melee (3d6+13/×3, *Mindbite*) and +23 melee (3d6+5 plus paralysis, bite) or +20 ranged (paralysis, slime spit); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft. (20 ft. with *Mindbite*); SA paralyzing slime, spell-like abilities, spells, *summon demodand,*; SQ darkvision 120 ft., damage reduction 15/good, immune to acid, cold, fire, mind-affecting effects, and poison, scent, *see invisibility,* spell resistance 30, two-faced; AL NE; SV Fort +15, Ref +13, Will +14; Str 23, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 22.

MINDBITE

This intelligent +4 *defending guisarme* is a potent weapon. Not actually evil, it has served Dyr'ryd for many years, and is mostly indifferent to his cruelty. Unlike most magic weapons, this guisarme resizes to best fit its wielder. *Mindbite* has Intelligence 14, Wisdom 14, Charisma 10, an Ego of 14 and is Neutrally aligned. It can speak Common, Demodand, and Ignan, and has darkvision 60 ft. and can hear. *Mindbite* can *detect magic* at will and *daze monster* three times a day; it can also use *feeblemind* and *confusion* once a day each. The guisarme has a dry voice and a wit to match. It enjoys a good battle, although it grows impatient with characters that don't share at least one aspect of neutrality in their alignment.

Strong evocation; CL 15th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor; Price 90,000 gp.

Paralyzing Slime (Ex): Lasts for 3d6 rounds; Fortitude save (DC 23) negates. His maximum range when spitting slime is 30 feet.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*detect magic, clairaudience/clairvoyance, fear* (DC 20), *invisibility, spider climb, tongues*; 3/day—*cloudkill* (DC 21), *fog cloud, ray of enfeeblement, stinking cloud* (DC 19); 2/day—*dispel magic*; 1/day—*mass charm monster* (DC 24). Caster level 15th.

Spells: Dyr'ryd casts arcane spells as an 8th-level sorcerer.

***Summon Demodand* (Sp)**: 1/day, 1d2 shators (30% chance of success) or either 1d4 kelubars or 1d6 farastus (70% chance of success).

Two-Faced (Ex): Once per round, the demodand's second face can take an additional standard action independent of the actions taken by the rest of the body. The action is limited to the following tasks: casting a spell, activating a spell-like ability, activating a magic item, or attempting a skill or ability check requiring a mental ability score (Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma).

Skills: Bluff +28, Concentration +26, Diplomacy +30, Disguise +17 (+19 to act in character), Gather Information +8, Hide +9, Intimidate +30, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (local) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +25, Listen +16, Move Silently +13, Search +25, Sense Motive +25, Spot +16.

Feats: Alertness, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Improved Trip, Multiattack, Power Attack.

Spells Known (6/8/8/6/4; save DC 16 + spell level): 0—*dancing lights, daze, flare, ghost sound, read magic, mage hand, open/close, ray of frost*; 1st—*enlarge, grease, mage armor, magic missile, true strike*; 2nd—*bull's strength, invisibility, see invisibility*; 3rd—*displacement, haste*; 4th—*stone shape*.

Possessions: *Mindbite* (intelligent +4 *defending guisarme*), *gauntlet of extend spell* (functions as *metamagic rod of extend spell*, but worn as a gauntlet), *medallion of thoughts, ring of evasion, Ring of Thirteen*.

Tactics: If warned, Dyr'ryd uses *clairaudience/clairvoyance* to check through the complex and determine in which direction the PCs are heading. When the PCs approach this chamber, he casts *invisibility* on himself, then the following spells in order: *mage armor, bull's strength, displacement*, and *true strike*. When the PCs enter, he casts *haste*. He extends *displacement* and *haste* with his gauntlet, reserving the last use of the item in case his spells are dispelled.

When the PCs enter, Dyr'ryd tries to stall them much as Shebeleth does in area **C24**. Revealing his massive, horrid form to the PCs, he asks why they've come. He grills them with difficult questions and tries to convince them that servitude to the demodands is not only inevitable, but good for the people of the Material Plane. He also tells the PCs that destroying the tree will set off a chain reaction that will destroy the mountain (although this is true, the PCs are unlikely to believe him given the circumstances). Dyr'ryd answers many of the PCs' remaining questions about the Cagewrights or the Thirteen—anything to stall them as long as possible—but refuses to disclose how the tree functions or what could shut it off.

In combat, Dyr keeps the PCs at bay with its spells and spell-like abilities, while Ryd shouts at its other face to hack the characters to bits with *Mindbite*. Once engaged in melee, the demodand uses its reach with its weapon to keep the PCs at a distance. If it can, Dyr'ryd bull rushes spellcasters or ranged attackers into one of the lava channels.

THE TREE OF SHACKLED SOULS

This artifact is the culmination of all the Cagewrights' scheming. Built to bear thirteen Soulcages—and the

Shackleborn imprisoned within them—the *Tree of Shackled Souls* resembles a massive, intricately spiked, adamantine thorn bush.

Attached to each branch is a soulcage. They sway gently as the seismic energy fueling the artifact courses through the device, as well as through the very air of the chamber. At the time of this adventure, each soulcage holds one of the Shackleborn. Their life energies combine with the raw elemental power of the volcano to form the matrix necessary to establish the massive portal to Carceri. The tree acts as a conduit and focus for that power. The Shackleborn are vital to the process, but their use is now passed; all that remains in the cages are their lifeless bodies; only a *wish* or *miracle* can restore them to life. Destroying the soulcages or removing their bodies does not stop the portal from forming.

The *Tree of Shackled Souls* is constructed from adamantine with a mithral core. It has hardness 20 and 1,500 hit points. It also radiates a massive *dimension lock* effect to a radius of a quarter-mile (see page 221 of the *Player's Handbook*). Any divination spells that attempt to reveal information directly about the tree automatically fail. Finally, the Cagewrights enhanced the tree to generate a stabilizing effect on the earth and stone surrounding it to a quarter-mile. This aura prevents tremors or other seismic activity from affecting this or any of the chambers within the Fiery Sanctum.

The tree's primary function is to act as a conduit for establishing a permanent gate to the plane of Carceri. Doing so requires a complex ritual to be performed over the course of several hours; as this adventure begins, the Cagewrights have just finished this ritual. At this point the tree functions on its own, slowly building up its power over the course of several more hours before it finally tears open the gate to Carceri. Dyr'ryd remains in the chamber to observe the process and make sure nothing goes wrong, but even if he and the rest of the Cagewrights are slain, the portal is still created if the PCs do nothing to stop it. The exact amount of time required for the tree to finish this process is variable; you should time this event for maximum excitement in your campaign.

The characters can prevent the tree from completing the construction of the Carcerian gate in one of two ways, by destroying it or by using the dispersal collar found in area **C14**.

Destroying the Tree: If the PCs can get through its hardness, they can destroy the tree with physical and magical attacks. Doing so prevents the creation of the portal, but has cataclysmic results nevertheless, as detailed in Concluding the Adventure, below.

Shackle the Tree: The Cagewrights built a failsafe device to contain the tree's energy should they need to postpone the ritual for some reason. They constructed a *dispersal collar* that, when fitted around any of the tree's branches or trunk, disperses the energy stored within the tree harmlessly and gradually. In theory, this would allow the Cagewrights to restart the ritual of planar binding at a later date, but the PCs can use the device to harmlessly defuse the situation. The *dispersal collar* is in area **C14**, guarded by Moltenwing.

Once attached, the *dispersal collar* takes 30 minutes to disperse the energy. It does so by emitting blinding light; anyone who looks at the tree during this time must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 30) or be permanently blinded.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure can end in one of three ways: in defeat, with an eruption, or in total success. Each possibility is detailed below.

DEFEAT

Should the PCs fail and be defeated, the *Tree of Shackled Souls* completes its dark duty and creates a permanent rift between the plane of Carceri and the city of Cauldron. Demodands pour through and set out to create a demodand empire in this part of the world. Whether they succeed in this grand endeavor is out of the characters' hands, although this scenario can form the foundation for an apocalyptic new campaign in which new PCs strive to close the portal and reclaim lost lands.

ERUPTION

If the PCs destroy the tree, the pent-up seismic energy is released in a massive rush back into the volcano's heart. They have prevented the formation of the Carcerian gate, but in so doing have triggered a massive volcanic eruption that eventually destroys the city above and possibly the PCs with it. The eruption process takes 10 minutes once the tree is destroyed, so PCs may be able to escape by using magic to flee.

Characters that remain in the volcano when it erupts are immediately slain (no save) and their bodies and equipment destroyed. Only a well-phrased *wish* or *miracle* can avert the explosion at this point. With Cauldron's destruction, this is a pyrrhic victory at best.

SUCCESS

The best solution to the situation is to use the *dispersal collar*. If the PCs use this device, the ground gives one last lurch as the tree is drained of energy. This final tremor is massive, and can be felt for dozens of miles. Characters still in the Fiery Sanctum are thrown to the ground if they fail a Reflex save (DC 20). Above, a significant portion of the southeast corner of Cauldron, weakened by previous tremors, collapses in a tremendous blast of sound. Many of the buildings collapse, and the central lake immediately drains and forms a new river that runs down the mountainside to one of the lakes far below. The ground remains stable and the city can be rebuilt, but the familiar concentric ring of

Cauldron has been permanently broken. It bears this scar for the remainder of its existence.

FROM THE ASHES

Ideally, the PCs complete the adventure by shackling the tree, freeing Cauldron from the potential tyranny of the demodands without completely destroying the city. The Shackleborn, one in each of the Soulcages, remain dead. Their bodies are withered and pinched as if completely drained of moisture, due to their soul energy being funneled into the tree. The bodies are intact, however, and now that things have been set right, the thirteen descendents of the demodands can be raised from the dead.

Jenya Urikas (or whoever the PCs helped support as the new lord mayor at the start of "Foundation of Flame") is leading citizens of Cauldron toward the Lucky Monkey Inn to regroup when the PCs emerge. If the PCs share the news of their success, Jenya, near tears, hugs them all and stops the massive procession to spread the word that the city has been saved. The PCs are heralded as the heroes of the city, and the new lord mayor makes a vow to have statues of the characters erected at this very spot in honor of the moment. He also promises to name a new holiday in Cauldron after the heroes (named after their group name, if they have one, or simply "Heroes Day" if they do not).

Allow the PCs time to bask in their victory. They've accomplished something incredible. Over the next several weeks, the citizens of Cauldron slowly return to their shattered city and begin the process of rebuilding. The PCs can aid in this process as they see fit, but things are not quite safe in Cauldron yet. Two additional adventures approach in the next two issues of *DUNGEON*.

For one last villain remains.

Adimarchus himself.

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"Mad God's Key" is designed for a group of four 1st-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 2nd–3rd level characters. All NPCs in the adventure should have their class levels advanced by an amount equal to the increase in average party level, with the exception of Marek and Flegon, the two thugs who the PCs catch at Theldrat's shop.

Replace the zombies in area **T7** with ghouls. Area **T10** should become infused with unholy energies that grant the skeletons found there a +2 profane bonus to Armor Class, a +2 profane bonus on attack rolls and weapon damage rolls, and fast healing 2. In area **T12**, replace the owlbear skeleton with an ogre zombie.

Remember that if you change the level of the encounters in this adventure, you'll need to adjust the treasure amounts as well. Consult the section on Treasure that begins on page 51 of the Dungeon Master's Guide for more specific details.

Chris Thomasson once cackled gleefully as DUNGEON *editor over the lethal Adventure Path encounters his evil authors concocted. He was nearly giddy over being able to add to the legacy. Have fun with Moltenwing!*

MOUNT ZOGON
MUSHROOM, I KNOW IT'S CANNIBALISM IF I EAT A HUMAN... BUT IS IT STILL CANNIBALISM IF I EAT A DWARF? OR A KOBALD?
I DON'T KNOW...
I THINK I SHOULD BE ABLE TO EAT WHATEVER I WANT! I MEAN, WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE? WHO CARES? I'M LIVING IN MOUNT ZOGON NOW, AFTER ALL — NOT SOME STUPID PEOPLE-PACKED CITY!
SO..... WILL YOU BE EATING ME WHEN I DIE?
EAT YOU??? NO! NO-NO-NO-NO! I'D NEVER EAT YOU!!
YOU'RE POISONOUS.

BY TONY MOSELEY

The DAILY SPELUNKER

WORLD'S LARGEST DUNGEON OPENS!

First Adventurers Dispatched During Inaugural Festivities

Fans overwhelmed by AEG's release of The World's Largest Dungeon.

A veritable Who's Who of the monster community gathered for the glamorous opening of *The World's Largest Dungeon.* Guests were ushered along the red carpet to the gaping entrance, where they received an extensive tour of the over 1,600 rooms, and a warm welcome from the resident monsters representing the entirety of the fantasy milieu. Following the tour, guests danced the night away in Section "H", serenaded by the musical stylings of Mad Marty Minotaur and the Gibbering Damned. Among the noted celebrities in attendance were the dark elf princess Izzentha Screamshade garbed in a cobweb gown from the *Come Into My Parlor* collection; green dragon ingénue Shirley the Malo-dorous wearing the scent by *Horrid Swamp Landfill;* and the goblin warlord King Weed I, clad in a powder blue polyester tux borrowed from "this guy I know", along with his tribal entourage.

"This the best premiere since the *Keep on the Borderlands*™ opened," said prominent lich Ghep of Eternal Bones, dressed in a burial shroud by Giorgio Armani and accompanied by his phalanx of undying thralls. "And the hors d'oeuvres just can't be beat. Have you tried the spitted halfling?"

The highlight of the festivities involved the dungeon's first interlopers, who stumbled upon the festivities and were promptly dispatched by party-goers.

"Hey, this isn't the vault," lead fighter Gareth the Absurdly Virile claimed, shortly before being mashed into paste on *The World's Largest Dungeon* dance floor.

The interruption was a huge hit with the crowd.

"How cool is it that they would show up just now?" King Weed proclaimed. "Did they plan that? They couldn't have planned that…"

Proceeds from the evening will go to *The World's Largest Dungeon Relief Fund,* an organization dedicated to keeping treasure levels high and interested adventurer's curious. *The World's Largest Dungeon* will be open to the public this August.

Coming Gen Con Indy, 2004.

Dungeon Vacation

What Region is Best for your Party?

Four out of five PCs never return from *The World's Largest Dungeon.* But should that stop you and your family from planning the vacation of your lives? We'll tell you all the hot spots and popular tourist attractions.

[Continued on F9]

Today's Weather

Lava Predicted

Inhabitants of Region "M" were warned to stay underground and in their homes today after meteor-arcanists predicted a lava flow front moving in fast. Those with especially thin fur or children are encouraged to board up their windows…

[Continued on E5]

Graffiti Outbreak

by Stead Fastly

The recent markings in the minotaur halls of Region "F" have caused an uproar in the community. Labeled "offensive" by some, these markings are said to be left behind by "adventurers", without any regard for…

[Continued on G8]

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MASTERING THE GAME

STARTING A NEW CAMPAIGN (PART 1)

BY MONTE COOK

You know the rules of the game. You've read the books. You've got some interesting ideas brewing, and you're itching to present them to your friends. You want to run a campaign. Now, this might be your first time at the helm of a game, or it might just be a *new* campaign you're starting up after having run them in the past.

So, now you just need to draw a map and start assigning stats to NPCs, right? Well, maybe. But truth be told, there's probably a number of things you should consider before putting pen to paper (or fingers on a keyboard).

Why a New Campaign?

The first question you might want to ask yourself is (ideally) an easy one. Why are you starting a campaign? See if your answer fits the most common answers to the question:

1. You've been playing the game for a while now and you want to give the DM's chair a try. While you're no newbie to the game, you've never DMed before. That's OK. You're about to embark on a really cool journey. DMing has different challenges and different rewards than playing. It's a big undertaking, but it's also the best outlet for your creativity that you can find, hands down. You get to be the guy who knows the secrets, who pulls the strings and—quite literally—runs the show.

2. You've run campaigns before and you know you love it. You've got some new ideas that you think the players will really like. For you, this isn't your first campaign, it's just a new campaign. If this is your answer, you know what you're doing, but like absolutely every other DM in the world, you could use a few tips on making this new game an even more fun and rewarding experience. Sometimes a new campaign can feel an awful lot like the last one and needs a jolt or a twist to make it something special. If this is a new campaign, you've ideally got some ideas that you've never tried before or things that the players have never seen before.

3. Somebody's got to do it. Honestly, I hope this isn't your answer, but it sometimes comes down to this. In a situation where no one really wants to be the DM, but without a DM you can't have a game, it befalls upon someone to bite the bullet. If this is the case, structure your campaign to be short. Take turns being the DM, with everyone running a short-lived game so that no one is stuck doing something they don't want to do. When it's your turn to sit behind the DM's screen, take your job as seriously as you can—don't be a player wearing a DM's guise, running an NPC along with the party that does everything better than the PCs, or showing that you can defeat the PCs with far too challenging encounters. It's the DM's job to be fair and provide a campaign for everyone to enjoy—not a battleground for them to face off against you, and not an arena for you to humiliate them or crush them in a competitive way. Of course, you might just find that you like being the DM, once you give it a try. Lots of great, lifelong DMs got their start because no one else wanted to do it.

Where Are You Going to Play?

The first of a number of logistical questions you need to answer is where are you going to play? Where you and the players

THE SECOND QUESTION

It's worth mentioning that the second question you should ask yourself, after "why run a campaign," is: "What game are we going to play?" This column generally assumes that the choice you're going to make is DUNGEONS & DRAGONS. But that's not the only choice. You could run a modern game with *d20 MODERN*, a space opera with *Star Wars*, a horror game with *Call of Cthulhu*, or any of a number of other genres and games: superheroes, western, post apocalypse, hard sci-fi, and much more. Choose a game that everyone likes, if possible, and one that either everyone is familiar with or one where you don't mind teaching the rules. While the DM doesn't have to be everyone's instructor, you do need to have a good grasp of the game, and thus will often be the one who best understands the rules.

Keep in mind that most of the advice and direction you'll get in this column and all future installments apply to any roleplaying game you would choose.

sit can have a surprisingly profound effect on the campaign.

Of course, for many players, there isn't really an issue here. If you're a college student and the only place available is your dorm room, then that's all you've got. You make do with what you have. Better to game in a less-than-ideal location than not to play at all!

Sometimes it's asking a lot from one person to be both the DM and the host every week. You may not want to have the game where you live. On the other hand, you might find it easiest to have the game at your home because that way you don't have to schlep your notes and books and things someplace each week. Really, it's up to you. As DM, you should always have final say over the location of the game.

It's worth noting that no matter whose house you're at—the DM's or another player's—that person shouldn't be expected to also provide snacks or drinks. The burden of providing and paying for such things should be shared. In fact, if there was truly justice in the world, the DM should really never have to pay for food or drinks at all, considering the work he puts into the game, the expense he shoulders for books, adventure supplements, and so on. But if you're reading this, you're probably a DM, so I'm preaching to the choir on this one. Solidarity, my friends.

Common Locations

Here are a few common locations for running a game and issues related to them:

The Dining Room Table. Perhaps the most frequent location for a roleplaying game is the good old trusty dining room table. It's usually the biggest table available, with plenty of chairs and nice access to the refrigerator. However, the drawbacks to consider are that the dining room probably offers a less than atmospheric setting and it's probably in a high-traffic area of the house, which could lead to a lot of distractions or interruptions.

The Living Room. Some people choose to play in the living room, with some players sitting on the couch and others in chairs or sitting on the floor. Sometimes they use a coffee table in the middle, sometimes no table at all. The advantages to gaming on the couch is that it's comfortable and relaxed. The drawback is that it might be a little too relaxed. Without a nice, central table for everyone to sit around (and focus upon), people are going to be slowly, subconsciously encouraged to not pay attention, to allow themselves to get distracted, or to start unrelated conversations. It may sound funny to hear, but the environment may indeed be too casual. If the game session has no distinction from a bunch of friends talking casually it can more easily devolve into just that.

If playing in a room without a table is desired or at least acceptable, consider choosing a room other than the living room, such as a rec room, an out-of-the-way den, a sun porch, or what have you. At least these rooms are less likely to have the non-gamers in the house walking through or wanting to watch the TV. (If there are no non-gamers in the house, it's much less an issue.)

A Public Location. Some people go to a pub to game, gather around a table at a restaurant, or get a table in the student union at a university. This can be convenient, and it has the upside of no one having to play the role of the host, but the drawbacks are so obvious that they hardly need to be mentioned. You will need to expect—to in fact plan upon—people not involved in the game disturbing things. They may come up not knowing they're disturbing anything, or they may come up to find out

CREATING THE IDEAL GAMING LOCATION

Here's some more tips on customizing your gaming space:

- A ping pong table makes for a decent game table, although it's a little high and its so big its hard to reach the center of it.
- Sometimes music can help set the mood. Setting up your space where there's a CD player or stereo helps.
- Be aware of pets. A cat walking across the table can be distracting while you're playing, but if one of your players is allergic, it can be more than just annoying.
- The DM needs more space than the players. You often want enough room to have an open rulebook next to you as well as your campaign notes, NPC stats, and a pad of paper to write on.
- The DM needs to be able to sit somewhere where no player can easily see the adventure notes.
- Don't play in a room with lots of fragile objects or on an antique table that would be ruined if someone spilled a soda. It's not worth the stress.
- Consider making sure that the gaming area has some extra dice, extra pens or pencils, and some scratch paper, all available for anyone's use.

what you're up to. It's not insurmountable, but it's absolutely something to consider.

Public places are also likely to be distractingly noisy as well.

The Ultimate Game Experience: The Game Room. Some people are able to devote a room in their house or apartment just for gaming. Such a room can be outfitted with shelves for game books, a big table and some chairs, and maybe even some posters or artwork to help set a mood. The room becomes a sanctuary from the real world—everyone understands that when they walk into the game room, they are entering a different realm. However, this is a fantastic luxury that frankly not everyone can enjoy.

Consider, however, some of the out-of-the-way rooms in your home that could possibly be converted into a game room—maybe not a full-time conversion, but just on game nights. For example, setting up a card table or two in your unfinished basement with a few folding chairs isn't so much work. And you can tack your campaign world map on the wall and leave it up all the time. Who's going to object? You could do the same thing in the attic, a closed-in porch, an unused bedroom, or even your garage.

The point is to create a place that you and the players can forget is what it really is for a few hours. A place where there's just not much to focus on other than the matter at hand: the campaign.

It's worth noting that better game stores provide rooms like this for customers to game in. Most are ideal locations to set up your game—ask your local retailer for availability.

Location Considerations

There are a number of factors you should consider when choosing a game space.

Comfort. Non-gamers or new gamers are often surprised by how long game sessions sometimes last. At minimum, most are a few hours long, and some marathon games go for far longer than that. If you're going to ask a number of your friends to hang out with you for this kind of time, you need to make sure that they're comfortable. They should have decent chairs to sit on and someplace to put their books and character sheet. They should have some kind of surface to write on. If you use miniatures, you're going to want a flat surface to put them on that everyone can see.

The location must have convenient access to a bathroom and water. If there's some kind of food and drinks available, all the better.

Ideally, the room shouldn't be too terribly hot or cold, but realistically too hot is more of a danger than too cold, since you've got a number of people in the room. In either case, try to alert everyone coming of what the temperature will be like so that they can dress accordingly.

Space. This really is a part of being comfortable, but it's worth stressing. If you don't have anywhere to set your adventure notes, keep the rulebooks handy, and set your beverage of choice, you're going to get frustrated quickly. If the players are crammed in a small space they're not going to want to spend a lot of time there, and you don't want to create a situation where your players are anxious to leave the game.

Also remember that cramming five or six people into one space for hours at a time can make a room quite stuffy. Add in various foods and you're quickly going to get some bad smells. A fan helps take care of the stuffiness.

Setting a Mood. Different places convey different moods. A good DM can establish any kind of mood in any location, but an appropriate space certainly makes your job easier. While not everyone can play DUNGEONS & DRAGONS in an actual castle, playing in a room filled with curio cabinets of Precious Moments figurines can hinder things. Playing D&D around a table helps immensely, particularly if you use miniatures, because then the players all focus on the table and what's on it. The table, in effect, represents the fantasy world. (Scatter a few pieces of cool fantasy artwork—like the cover of a *DRAGON* or *DUNGEON* magazine, for example—to help create that connection.)

A campaign set in the modern day, however, could lend itself very nicely to your living room, where the things of the real world that you have in your house actually reinforce your chosen setting.

There are other factors that equate mood with game location. One interesting trick for running horror scenarios, for example, is to situate yourself so that the players all sit with their backs to a large open space or an open door, but you face that open space or door. Turn off all lights in the open space or the room that the door opens into. It's unnerving to sit with a large, dark area behind you. Particularly if someone (you, the DM) keeps looking over your shoulder at the dark area—just for the briefest of moments—as if he sees something strange. Or, if you're running a science fiction game, choose the room available to you that is the most clean and stark, or the room where the players can see your computer, or some other visual, "futuristic" cue.

Away from distractions. Depending on your circumstances, this can be a difficult one as well. Ideally, you want something far away from the TV (or just ensure that it's turned off), away from the phone (let the answering machine take your phone calls), and far away from someplace liable to have frequent passersby—a problem most prevalent if you're playing in a college union or some other public locale. A location that's quiet, or at least fairly so, is also important. If your players are missing details because they can't hear everything you say, that's a real problem.

Distractions can cause a lot of problems in a game. If a player is reading comic books, playing a video game, or talking on the phone, not only is he not going to be able to keep up with what's going on, but he's going to distract other players as well as waste valuable game time getting caught up with whatever he's missed.

Think about potential distractions ahead of time. This is a problem that you can anticipate and take care of before it ever happens. Although we'll get to dealing with "table rules" in depth soon enough, determine ahead of time that you're going to have rules about players doing other things while the game is going on.

And if you know that no matter what kind of ground rules you lay down you're going to have a player or two violate them, perhaps you should reconsider who you invite to the game in the first place.

Monte Cook is the author of the DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide. *He runs his own publishing company, Malhavoc Press, located online at www.montecook.com.*

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LAIRS WITH FLAIR

BY RODNEY THOMPSON

The party has fought its way past the undead hordes populating the dungeon, avoided certain death and dodged traps that nearly ended the adventure in a grisly and untimely manner. Finally, the intrepid explorers burst into the chamber where the dark priest and the final showdown between good and evil awaits them and discover... another large room, just like every other room in the dungeon.

Not very exciting, is it?

Now imagine the same scene, only after knocking down the creaking wooden door the party steps into a lavishly decorated cathedral deep below the surface. Incredible paintings glorifying a dark god cover the walls, and malevolent eyes stare down at the party from the shadows of a second floor. The priest chants rituals over an onyx altar while wax slowly drips from candles in a chandelier overhead.

Most dungeon-based adventures feature a climactic battle, a showdown with the primary enemy in the dungeon that heralds the end of the adventure—or, the end of the adventurers. Additionally, many adventures have other critical battles that can change the course of the entire adventure. Setting these encounter locations up as memorable locales is a good way to ensure that the players understand the gravity of the situation and to take an otherwise bland backdrop and make it into a setting that spices up the final showdown.

Aesthetics

In the example above, the second room is far more interesting and memorable because it adds unique elements to what could potentially be just another room in the dungeon. Players will remember the encounter for weeks, months, or even years to come precisely because they could form a solid mental image of the setting. Though many consider the backdrop to be less important than the actual battle, there are certain elements of a dungeon's background that

can be integrated into any encounter to further differentiate it from less important encounters.

Design areas for major encounters with a motif in mind, and do not be afraid to try new things. An underground prison is familiar; an underground cathedral is not.

Multiple Levels

One good way to spice up a major encounter is to add a second or third floor to the location of the battle. This can be anything from balconies set into the walls to an entire upper level. Archers and spellcasters can use such higher ground to attack targets below without putting themselves in immediate danger; some DMs may choose to extend the +1 bonus on melee attacks from higher ground to ranged attacks if appropriate. Similarly, combat that takes place on one level often spills down into another, meaning that knocking an opponent off a ledge or leaping to safety below can turn the tide in battle.

Conversely, adding sub-levels to an encounter locale can be equally as interesting. Pit traps are common examples of such an addition, but adding an entire lower level opens up the arena and gives both sides of the conflict room to maneuver. Additionally, if the sub-level is only a few feet below the main floor, enemies can pop out of holes and make their attacks, then withdraw to the lower level to move to a different location without exposing themselves to other characters (gaining cover by hiding underneath the floor of the primary level).

Moving Between Levels

Moving from one level to the next is usually accomplished by simple movement (in the case of stairs) or by making Climb (ropes, ladders, vines) or Jump checks. During combat, these can be especially hazardous. If a character is attacked while in the middle of climbing (such as while hanging onto a wall of vines, or while dangling from a rope) she loses her Dexterity bonus to her AC and is flat-footed. If she is damaged, she must make a Climb check to avoid losing her grip and falling.

Moving Over Open Spaces

In situations where there are large open spaces in the combat arena, such as in the case of a room where balconies dot the walls above the main floor, some characters may wish to move over those open spaces without having to move to a different level. In some cases, a Jump check will be sufficient to allow such movement, but in others special rolls might be required. For example, jumping from a balcony onto a chandelier or dangling rope and swinging to the other side might require a Jump check to make the leap and then a Climb check (DC 10) to grab on. The character swings a distance equal to twice the result of his Jump check distance.

Additionally, swinging on a rope, chandelier, or other dangling object allows the character to swoop toward an opponent with increased speed. Any character swinging in such a fashion may bull rush an opponent within range.

Cover

Cover is an important element of combat that should be added to any room in a dungeon where a major encounter takes place. Cover not only gives the player characters a way to keep from being destroyed by powerful enemy attacks, it also gives the DM a way to move key villains into safe locations if the players find the encounter less than challenging. Cover works to the advantage of both the player and the DM, and can be placed in almost any location. Columns and pillars make excellent cover while still blending in with the overall design of the dungeon, and small alcoves in the walls or decorative statues provide both atmosphere and practical uses.

Obstacles

One of the best ways to add a new element to standard combat is to introduce terrain obstacles that make basic movement more difficult. These obstacles can transform almost any encounter; battling five orcs may not seem like much of a challenge, but battling five orcs when trying not to fall on a floor covered with slippery moss is.

Falling Objects

Falling ceiling tiles, collapsing pillars, and plummeting chandeliers are all examples of ways the backdrop can interfere with combat. Whenever a character passes through a square that is the target of a falling object, the character must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or be struck by the object. Use the standard rules for damage from falling objects (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 303) if the save fails.

Grease and Oils

Dungeon floors are rife with slick substances ranging from spilled lantern oil to half-dried blood. Any character moving over a section of the floor covered in grease, oil, or other slippery liquids must make a Balance check (DC 12) or fall to the ground. This ends the character's move action.

Running Water

Running water can encompass anything from small aqueducts in the floor to artificial (or unintentional) waterfalls. Any character moving over running water in a dungeon must make a Balance check (DC 12) similar to moving over an oily patch. Additionally, characters may hide behind a waterfall in a dungeon, gaining concealment (but no cover).

Shifting Terrain

Some combat arenas may have terrain or floor tiles that shift when touched. These can include tiles that drop away when pressure is placed on them, or stones in a floor that shift up and down constantly, making movement hazardous. Any character that moves over terrain designed to shift its height or position must make a Balance check (DC 17) or stumble, ending his or her move action. Failure by 5 or more means the character falls prone.

SPICE UP YOUR TRAVEL

BY TRAVIS STOUT

Every DM has been in this situation before: The adventure is planned, the villain's dire plot and wicked motives are outlined, the monster encounters are balanced to the party's level like a finely tuned machine, and the treasures to be gained have been selected and tucked away with the utmost care—but when it comes to describing the miles and miles of trackless wilderness the party must trek through, your mind hits a blank wall. How many different ways can you describe a forest, or a mountain, or a fetid, giant-rodent-infested swamp? Try spicing up your travel monologues with some of these descriptions. Each is numbered, so you can easily pick one at random, or you can select one that catches your fancy. While this article only features a few different terrain types with a few descriptions each, you can easily use these as inspiration for your own terrain descriptions.

Forests (1d8)

1 The woods are preternaturally quiet, with only the occasional bird call breaking the silence. Dim sunlight, filtering through the canopy, dapples the leaf-covered ground, casting everything in a weird, greenish hue. A scent of wet earth hangs heavy on the air.

2 A thick dampness permeates the forest, carrying the smell of rotting leaves. The rustle of something unseen occasionally stirs the undergrowth, and the leaves above you drip with water. The slightest

touch soaks your clothing with chill rainwater.

3 The great, hollow trunks of ancient trees rise high above the new growth, stately but gutted by some long-ago fire. A smell of smoke still seems to cling to the air, and the new undergrowth makes footing treacherous.

4 Leaves of scarlet and gold carpet the ground and gust along on the breeze. A crisp chill gives the air a refreshing bite, and your footsteps are loud and sharp on the dry carpet of leaves.

5 As the sun sinks behind the barren, skeletal trees, the temperature drops rapidly, frosting your breath on the air and making metal armor uncomfortably chilly. A thick layer of snow blankets the ground, muffling sounds and filling the air with an eerie quiet.

6 The new spring blooms fill the air with a soft, sweet fragrance and a vibrant pastiche of color. Songbirds whistle and chirp in the branches, and all around you are signs of new growth and life.

7 A bright, full moon casts the forest in a pale silvery glow, the light reflecting off of a nearby stream. The scent of night-blooming flowers wafts on the still air, and the occasional flicker of a firefly cuts through the darkness for an instant before vanishing again.

8 A rich, red sunrise drenches the forest in hues of scarlet and crimson, casting long, spidery shadows along the ground. The morning dew gleams on the undergrowth as the first stirrings of diurnal animals rustle the brush.

Mountains (1d6)

1 The clear, thin air stings your lungs with each breath, and a high, cold wind howls between the peaks. Here above the tree line, the ground is bare and rocky save for a blanket of snow that lies across the range. From somewhere high above, the piercing cry of an eagle sounds.

2 High, steep rock walls rise on either side of the narrow pass, sheltering you from the sun until it is directly overhead. The ground is unnaturally smooth, and occasional, crumbling carvings on the walls hint that this was once a dwarf-road.

3 The stars burn clear and bright in the pitch-black sky above, casting a faint illumination on the craggy peaks below. Without the sun's warmth, it is bitterly cold at this altitude, but at least the night air is still and silent.

4 Towering pine trees rise from the rocky soil of the mountains, the scent of their needles strong and pungent. A swift-flowing, icy cold stream of snowmelt babbles as it rushes swiftly over the rocks.

5 The crumbling ruin of an ancient watchtower stands high on the peak above you, its hollow, empty arrow slits seeming to glare down at you. The air hangs eerily quiet, neither breeze nor animal sound reaching your ears.

6 A deep gorge plunges between two high, snow-crowned peaks. The roar of the river that carved the gorge echoes from far below, the water crashing violently over sharp rocks. A precarious-looking bridge of rope and wood spans the gap, and a narrow, steep trail of switchbacks leads down to the riverbank.

Deserts (1d6)

1 The sun blasts down with fiery intensity, glaring like the eye of a baleful god. A hot wind gusts across the dunes, kicking up sand-devils and serving as a reminder of the constant threat of sandstorm.

2 Heat makes the horizon seem to shimmer, casting doubt on the reality of everything you see. Sand crunches under your feet, and the smell of sage fills the air. The long, undulating dunes seem to stretch on to infinity, with neither relief nor respite in sight.

3 A lake of cool, clear water, bordered by fragrant flowers and shady palm trees, rests incongruously in the blasted waste of the desert. Small waves lap enticingly at the shore, and a breeze rustles the palm fronds—but is the oasis real, or just another mirage?

4 After the sun sets, the desert goes from blazingly hot to icy cold in a matter of minutes. The night is dark as sackcloth, with no moon to light the sands, and a freezing wind howls, stirring the sands into a roiling cloud.

5 The wind shrieks with the fury of a demon, knifing across the desert and whipping the dunes into a vicious sandstorm. All other sounds are lost over the whistling of the wind, and the clouds of sand reduce visibility to just a few feet.

6 A long, winding canyon provides you with some shelter from the sweltering heat, at least until midday. The rushing sound of the river that carved the canyon echoes off the walls, and the footing is slick with river water

Swamp/Wetlands (1d4)

1 A dank, fetid smell rises from the miasma underfoot, and ripples in the water hint at unseen things slithering below the surface. The only sure footing comes from the small hillocks supporting small copses of gnarled, twisted trees.

2 The sunlight filters through the willow trees, dappling the water with intricate, undulating patterns. A soft breeze carries the smell of hibiscus flowers, stirring the willow branches and creating small, lapping waves on the surface of the water.

3 Crickets chirp incessantly, their constant nocturnal chorus joined by the occasional hoot of an owl. A gibbous moon hangs large and bright in the sky, shedding its silver light across the swamp as the smell of lilies fills the air.

4 The bitter chill of winter has frozen the peat solid, making for unusually firm footing. Ice crusts at the edge of the water, and scattered chunks of ice drift along the waterways lazily. The air is crisp and clean-smelling, but quiet; most of the swamp's inhabitants have either migrated to warmer climes or gone into hibernation.

LASSIVIREN THE DARK

RUTHLESS ASSASSIN

BY ROBERT J. SCHWALB
(BASED ON A CHARACTER CREATED BY AL HAMMACK)

Of all the figures antedating the Greyhawk Wars, few are as mysterious as Lassiviren the Dark. His obscurity is intentional, for as a ruthless assassin, he prefers anonymity. Those who know him do so by reputation only.

What little is known about this merciless killer comes from his associates, who claim Lassiviren grew up in the Bandit Kingdoms. They say the killer rarely speaks of his parents, and when he does, it is always with a ill-concealed hate. His parents, a prostitute and a dangerous drunkard, were both addicted to liquid agony and other dangerous narcotics. From a brutal childhood he learned the value of protecting himself first over anything else.

At age 14 he murdered the man who claimed to be his father, vowing never to take his abuse again. His mother reported the murder to the bandit king, who favored Lassiviren's father as one of his best thugs. Lassiviren was forced to flee into the wilderness. Somehow, he survived and found himself in Molag, a brutal city of hobgoblins enslaved to the dark lords of the Lower Planes. The young Lassiviren honed his skills as a killer there, disguising himself as a goblin while he lived in the slums and dodged dangers by hiding in the alleys

and sewers amidst the trash and detritus of human and hobgoblin squalor.

In time, Lassiviren's notoriety grew powerful enough that he was able to discard his goblin disguise and leave Molag. He traveled the Flanaess, eliminating marks wherever he stayed, assuming a myriad of pseudonyms and personas such as Lakajan, Jahleel, and Nerivissal, while myths sprung up around the world, naming him the Anemic, the Evil, or even the Demon of Darkness. He eventually established a network of spies and assassins, each posing as the lord of assassins and spreading the mystery of his actual identity.

Lassiviren evaded the many attempts by the Scarlet Brotherhood to kill him, avoided capture by Bladestorm, a Headhunter of the Church of Trithereon, and murdered several high-ranking officials during the escalation leading to the Greyhawk Wars. His time as a maverick killer ended when Turin Deathstalker (then Guildmaster of Assassins in the city of Greyhawk) prevented his assassination of Nerof Gasgal, Lord Mayor of the City of Greyhawk. Lassiviren spent the remainder of the decade in a Greyhawk prison, forgotten while his network continued to operate even though the head of the organization languished in a darkened cell.

Lassiviren escaped his cell in 587 CY, fleeing south to plot his revenge. His time in prison ruined his health, and he's now plagued by a persistent hacking cough. Despite his decrepit condition, he is still one of the the world's most skilled killers. It remains to be seen whether he reemerges into the modern world, or spends the rest of his days in hiding. But many fear, if he does return, there will be no one to stop him.

Appearance

Lassiviren could be anyone, man or woman, human or elf. He blends into societies with ease, changing his appearance to suit his purpose. Even when among his own people, he hides his appearance beneath the cowl of his long and heavy black cloak, casting his face in shadows. The only thing those who have seen him can agree on is that he stands about six feet tall and wears dark clothing.

RING OF FLYING

On command, this ring allows the wearer to fly, without having to maintain concentrration, as if affected by a *fly* spell. He can *fly* once per day for up to 5 minutes.

Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Forge Ring, *fly*; Price 8,000 gp.

Tactics

Lassiviren prefers attacking with surprise, concealing himself with *invisibility* or using his natural skills at subterfuge and disguise to hide his intent, while studying his enemy for the requisite number of rounds before using his death attack ability. If prevented from surprising his opponents, he retreats using both of his rings, one to hide and the other to provide an unexpected form of movement. When forced into combat, Lassiviren assigns the enhancement bonus from his *+1 defending shortsword* to his Armor Class (this bonus is included in the stat block) and fights with full Combat Expertise (this bonus is not).

Development

Lassiviren is an ideal "power behind the throne," a perfect manipulator of grand events throughout your campaign. Since Lassiviren is so adept at assuming different identities, you can introduce him at any point in your campaign, revealing his role in past adventures when he may have posed as important NPCs, guiding the heroes to serve his own ends. In worlds other than GREYHAWK, Lassiviren can serve as the leader for any similar world-spanning organization of assassins, thieves, or other criminals. In Faerûn, he could be one of the leaders of the Shadow Thieves or the Night Masks. In an *Oriental Adventures*-based game, he could be an expert called in from foreign lands to serve a ninja-clan. And in EBERRON, he could be a favored agent of the Order of the Emerald Claw, or even posing as a high-ranking family member in one of the Dragonmarked Houses.

Lassiviren the Dark, Male Human Rog4/Ftr4/Asn7: CR 15; Medium humanoid (human); HD 9d6–9 plus 4d10–4; hp 44; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +12; Grp +14; Atk +19 melee (1d6+6/17–20, *short sword of life stealing*); Full Atk +17/+12/+7 melee (1d6+6/17–20, *short sword of life stealing*) and +15 melee (1d6+3/17–20, *+1 defending short sword*); SA death attack (DC 19), sneak attack +6d6, spells; SQ evasion, improved uncanny dodge, poison use, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +8 (+11 against poison), Ref +16, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 8, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 17.

Skills: Bluff +21, Climb +12, Craft (alchemy) +8, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +12 (+14 acting), Forgery +9, Gather Information +11, Hide +32, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (local) +8, Move Silently +22, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +22.

Feats: Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Critical (short sword), Mobility, Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword), Weapon Specialization (short sword).

Languages: Common, Elven, Halfling.

Assassin Spells Known (4/4/2; save DC = 12 + spell level): 1st—*feather fall, jump, sleep, true strike*; 2nd—*cat's grace, darkness, invisibility, spider climb*; 3rd—*deep slumber, deeper darkness, nondetection*.

Possessions: Short sword of life stealing, +1 defending short sword, +1 glamered studded leather armor, ring of flying, ring of chameleon power, cloak of protection +2, 3 doses purple worm poison, 5 doses giant wasp poison.

Story and art by **Kyle Stanley Hunter.** Lettering by **Sean Glenn.** A **Super Unicorn** production. **www.superunicorn.com**

MEANWHILE, WITHIN LOLTH'S TEMPLE...
WE'RE MEETING MORE RESISTANCE THAN EXPECTED, PIKE.
YOU HAD PROMISED TO TURN THE SPIDER-LOVERS TO OUR SIDE BY NOW.
LIFE HERE IS LEISURELY AND DISORGANIZED. YOU HAVE LOST SIGHT OF YOUR MISSION, GIGOLO.
NONSENSE, BAZRAL.
THE PRIESTESS ARAAKA IS MY THRALL. SERJENKO'S TEAM FAILED TO TURN UP ANYTHING.
I DOUBT THIS ULOLOK ACTUALLY EXISTS.
YOU ARE A VAIN FOOL. FAIL TO HAVE THE CHAOS EGG NEUTRALIZED AND I WILL HAVE YOU DESTROYED.
THE VISION! NOT A WINGED DROW, AN ERINYES!
DID YOU GET AN EYEFUL, ILLITHID?
TO BE CONTINUED

breath of life

illustration by Stan Shaw

If everything goes according to plan, my stepsons Ryan, Nolan, and I will embark on a new and wonderful phase of our lives together this evening. We'll grab some root beers, sit at our dining room table, and I'll take them on their very first dungeon crawl.

We've spent the last week or so creating characters, discussing the rules, and building excitement for tonight's adventure. I've been staying up an extra hour or two each night after the kids go to bed, poring over websites and my core rulebooks, simulating combats, and creating NPCs. I'm pretty nervous, because I'm DMing an adventure for the first time since the *Isle of Dread* in 6th grade. And back then, I managed to kill everyone in the party pretty quickly, and never got to sit behind the screen again.

Last night, Nolan and my wife Anne were in the kitchen cutting his hair. I was at the dining room table reviewing cleric spells, while I listened to *The Two Towers* soundtrack. Ryan came out of his room and sat down across from me.

"Watcha doing?" he said.

"Just refreshing my memory. It's been—" I paused. "Well, it's been a really long time since I ran a campaign, and I want..."

I want you to think I'm cool. I want to do something special for you. I want to share something with you guys that isn't sports-related, so your dad can't take it over and force me out of it.

"I want to make sure you guys have a good time," I said. "It's important to me."

"I'm so excited!" he said.

"Me too."

He absentmindedly rolled some d20s I'd scattered across the table.

"Can I roll up an extra character, just for fun?" he said.

"Sure," I said. "The dice bags are on my desk."

He got up, and walked over to my office. My desk, normally buried under computer books and writing journals, is currently covered with gaming books: *GURPS, Mutants & Masterminds, Car Wars*, too many Cheapass games to count, and—of course—a stack of D&D books ten feet tall.

"It's 4d6, right?" he called out.

"Yep, 4d6. And you—"

"—throw away the lowest roll." we said in unison.

"Ryan, I..."

I love it when that happens.

"I have an extra character sheet here that you can use." I said.

"Okay."

I went back to my books. A moment later, Ryan returned. Four six-sided dice dropped from his hand and rolled across the table.

"Since you're the DM, will you watch my rolls?"

"You bet! This is..."

This is something I'll remember for the rest of my life.

"This is really fun."

He picked up the dice, and threw them: 2 – 4 – 5 – 1.

"Eleven?! Oh man!" he said.

"Hey, eleven isn't a bad roll at all." I noticed something familiar about the dice. Two of them were black, with red numbers. There was a skull where the one would have been.

"Hey, I have dice just like those in—" my heart stopped. I jumped up, and ran into my office.

There it was, in the cool blue glow of my monitor, atop my *Freedom City* sourcebook: an open bag of dice. *My* bag of dice. The black one, with the red pyramid from the Bavarian Illuminati on it. A clear d10 and two brilliant blue d12s sat near its open top. Its drawstring was cast carelessly across the side of the book, dangerously close to my Zen fountain.

Ryan slowly walked into the room.

"Is something wrong?" he said.

"You... you touched my dice!" I said. I felt a little woozy.

"Well... yeah." he said.

"No. Ryan, you..."

You are about to see your stepdad as the old gamer geek he really is. The gamer geek I hope you'll be one da... heh. This is actually kind of cool.

"You can't ever touch my dice." I said patiently.

"Uhh... aren't they *all* 'your dice?'"

"Technically, yes, but these here, in this bag, they're the ones I've played with since I was in high school."

He furrowed his brow and looked at me for a moment, while I put my dice back into my bag. A white d8 with worn off blue numbers, the clear d10 with white numbers, a green d6 that's really a poker die...

"When I was younger, these dice..."

These dice were some of the most important things in my life. Well. I have some perspective now.

"These dice were a big part of my life." I said.

I held the bag in my hand and looked at him. For the first time in eight years, I saw some of myself reflected back.

"You know what? It's not that big a deal. I'd just rather you use some other dice." I said.

"So do I get to re-roll that eleven since I used..." he lowered his head, and spoke in a grave voice: "*The Forbidden Dice?*" He smiled.

We laughed together.

"Eleven is a good roll, Ryan." I said.

"I know, but twelve gets me plus one."

"Okay. You can re-roll. But if you get a lower roll, you have to keep it."

I tossed him my green bag, and he dug out 4d6.

"Deal." He said.

We walked back into the dining room and sat back down at the table. Ryan threw 4d6: 2 – 5 – 2 – 1.

"Nine?! Oh man!"

"I bet that eleven is looking pretty good now, isn't it?" I said.

"Shut up." He laughed.

He collected the dice, held them thoughtfully for a second, and said, "Wil, I'm sorry I used your dice. I just thought that bag was really cool."

"It's okay, Ryan. Someday..."

Someday, I'll give that bag, and all the dice in it, to you.

"Someday, you'll have your own dice, and your own dice bag, and you'll understand."

He threw 4d6: 6 – 6 – 4 – 4.

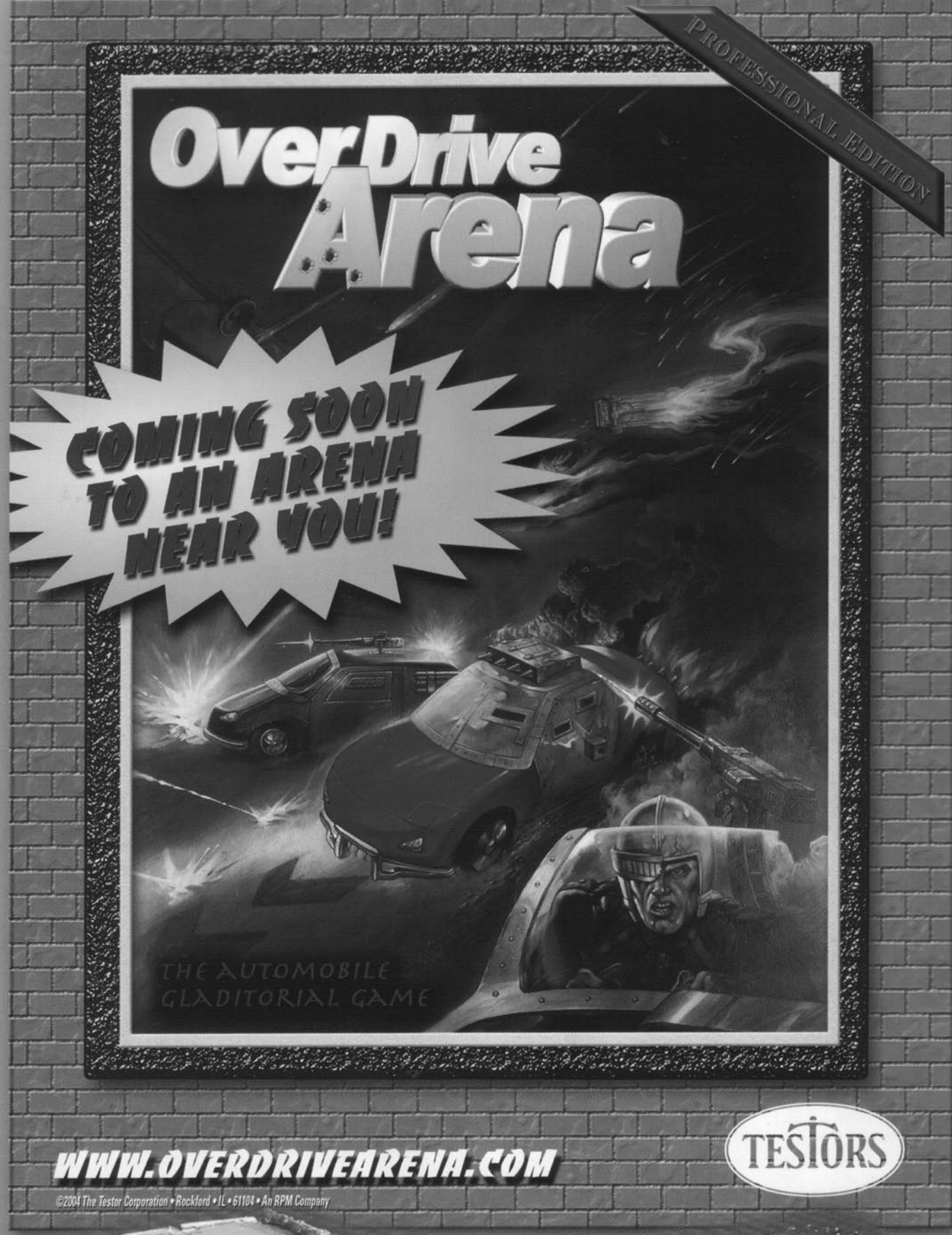
"Sixteen! Rock!" He threw the goat.

On a 3 × 5 card, he wrote a one and a six beneath his nine.

"Ryan, I..."

I love you more than you'll ever know. Thank you for sharing these moments with me.

"I can't wait to play with you guys tomorrow night."



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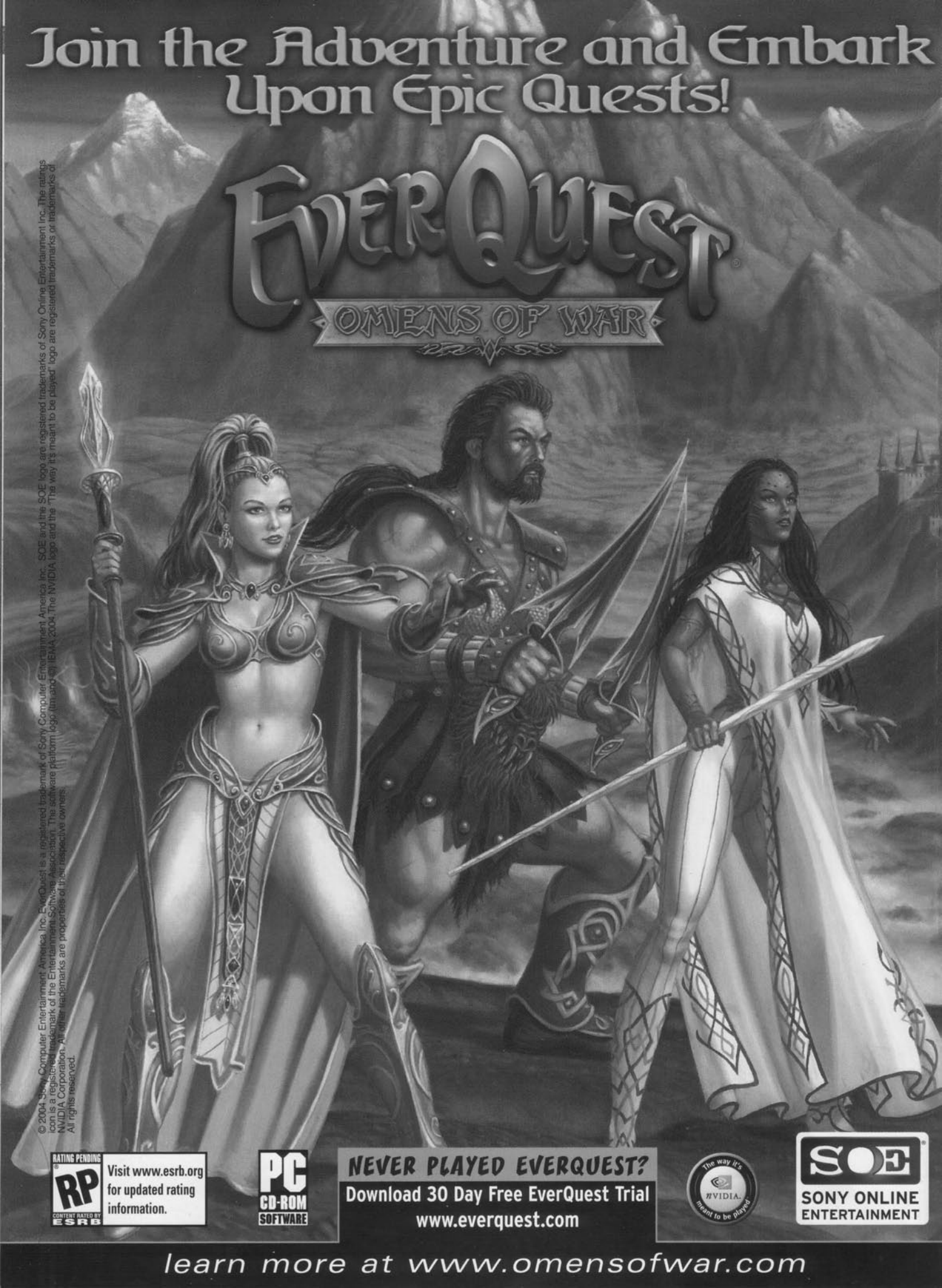
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Kop
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Standing
Skinrazer Rock

Red Belcher Isle
Ashfall Isle
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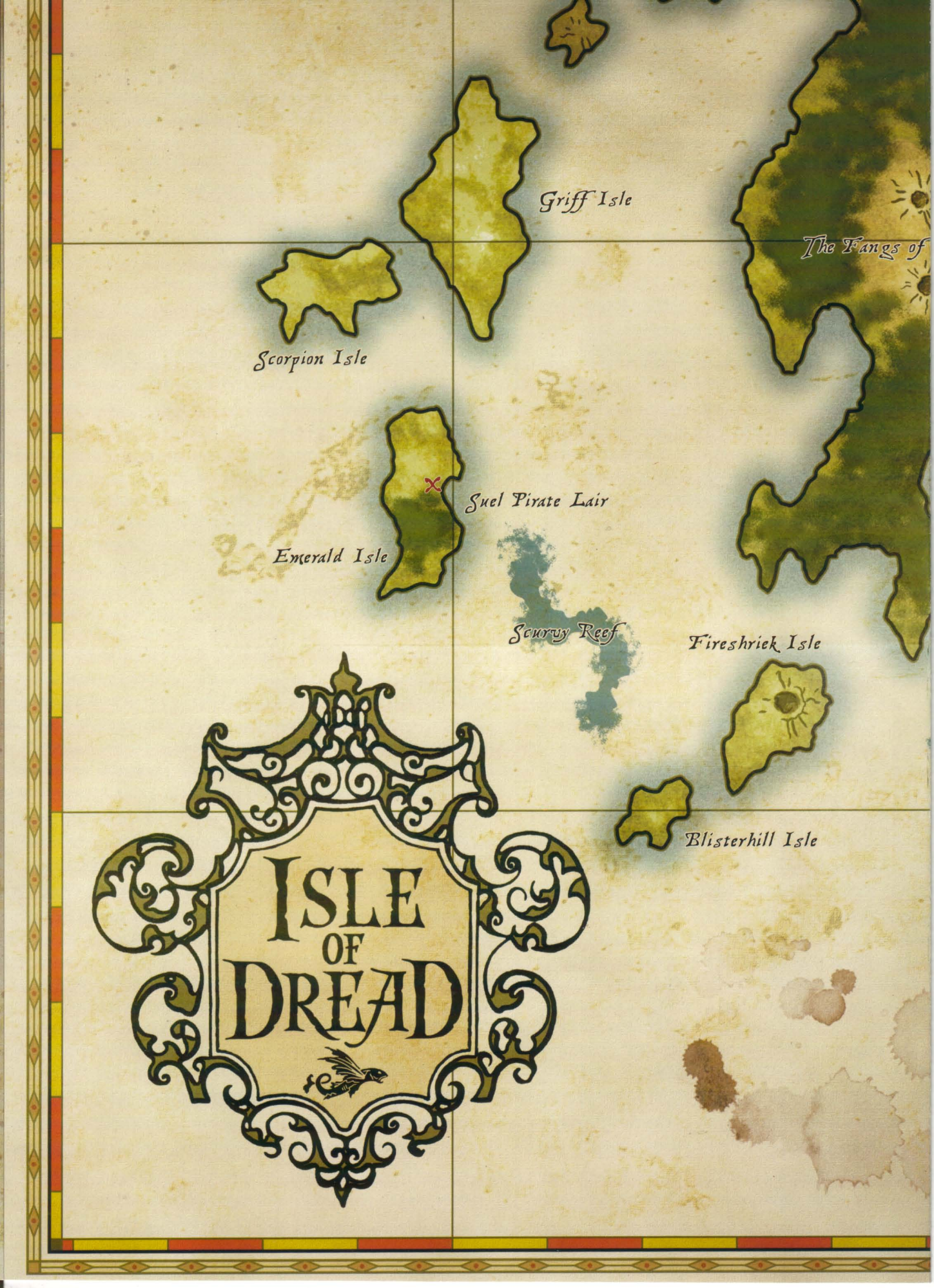
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Blisterhill Isle
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